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The Heart of Childhood

Harper's Novelettes

EDITED BY
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AND
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A TRANSPLANTED BOY

GEORGE HEATH
ZAN ZOO

Introduction

THE child's story which is not a story for children but for their elders is by no means an invention of the contributors to Harper & Brothers' periodicals. Fine work, tender and true, has been done heretofore by Mark Twain, by Mr. T. B. Aldrich, by Mr. J. M. Barrie, not to mention Dickens and Thackeray, and others in other languages than English. But it seems to us that the new school of briefer fictionists, who have done so much that is of fresh truth and novel impulse in other sorts, have got rather a new turn in the heart of childhood. Children like to be taken seriously, and though grown-up people cannot take them quite so seriously as children would like, yet the loving irony of these writers is such as the children would not easily find them out in. They employ a closer and subtler psychology in the study of those little souls than that known to earlier

writers, and even in the smiles which they cannot forbear there is the wistfulness, the self-pity for the things they have themselves outlived, which the reader cannot fail to find very winning. For the wide and comprehensive range of their qualities and characters the whole intercontrasting group of sketches here assembled is admirable. It is beautiful how the illusion of reality in the child's world is respected in all of them, as if their authors were always writing from a consciousness that

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy,"

but were not alarmed by occasional adumbrations apparently from another place.

W. D. H.

The First Pussy-Willows

BY ANNIE WEBSTER NOEL

COMING home from school Ruth always walked slowly until she heard some one behind her, when she quickened her steps a little. It was Richard—he always caught up at just the same place, being a boy. (Boys are rather monotonous.)

"You don't know who my best girl is," said Richard, one day, throwing stones at the trees as they walked along.

"Is it Lucy Stone?"

His disgust was intense. "Guess again," he added, tenderly. "She looks like you."

"Is it my sister?"

"N-aw! There it is on that sign," he said, pointing to a sign in a vacant lot.

She asked every letter but the R. Then all of a sudden she began to run, crying, gleefully, "Oh, I know, I know! It's Rose!"

"Stupid!" he shouted after her. "It's you."

But she was skipping far down the street, her braid bobbing behind her, and he did not see her again until the next day.

"Who's your best fellow?" he asked, eagerly, as he caught up. (Boys are monotonous.)

"His name's on that sign, too."

"Is it R?" he demanded.

"It's on that line," she admitted.

"Is it R?"

"Yes, it is. But maybe it isn't you."

Why did she treat him that way? Well, she didn't love him. Yet he was the smartest boy in the school. He had brown eyes and brown hair and brown cheeks with just a dash of red in them. But she was *sure* she did not love him.

They had a composition to write. It was about Longfellow, and the teacher had put some questions on the board which they must answer: Where was he born? Where did he live? For what was he noted? Tell two anecdotes about him. What else can you say about him?

Richard knew all about him, and had reached the "what else" when, stopping to think, he caught sight of Ruth sitting

at her desk. Tears rolled slowly down Ruth's cheeks. She had "been looking round" while the teacher had been telling them about Longfellow.

Those tears hurt Richard so that he trod underfoot every law of boyhood and met Ruth at the very school gate. He told her where Longfellow lived, and when; where he was born; when he died; and two anecdotes. And then she agreed to go with him to get pussy-willows.

Who ever saw the first pussy-willows in the hands of a grown-up? The children always find them first. There is some mysterious bond between the soft little thing, pushing out of its brown shell, and the child-heart beating so rapturously above it; the same soft glow suffuses it and the child-cheek against which it is laid.

That day was spring. The next day a little lame boy came to school. (Something happened every day in Ruth's school.)

The little lame boy's name was John. He had been sent back from the grade above, as he could not keep pace with the others. Ruth, glancing at the dragging foot, felt the cruelty of it. Think of putting a lame boy back!

This was Wednesday. Ruth had cast

a pitying glance at the little boy as he swung himself down the aisle on his crutches. How was he going to get his composition done by Friday, when he was lame? It would be hard enough for her. She tucked her legs under the seat. She felt terribly ashamed of them. They were so round and they could skip so fast.

When school was over and the boys rushed out in a body the lame boy hobbled slowly down the stairs alone. Ruth walked boldly up to him.

"Do you know about Longfellow?" she asked, gently.

"No. Tell us, won't you?"

And Ruth told him where he lived, and when; where he was born; when he died; and two anecdotes—all that Richard had told her. Her own composition was never written. She felt as if she had given it to the lame boy. She heard Richard's shout as he raced in the school yard, and she resolved never to speak to him again, she felt so sorry for John.

All unconscious of his fate, Richard succeeded that day in having his seat changed so that he sat in the row next to Ruth. He pushed ahead of the other boys as they all trooped in. She saw him, but did not look. Presently she began to write a note. Not behind her Geography,

but openly, on her desk. Richard's heart beat high. He remembered the day they had gone for pussy-willows; he remembered how she had let him help her with her composition; he remembered how he had asked her who her best fellow was. She was going to tell him now.

She folded up the note and threw it over to the lame boy. She never would have done it if Richard had not had his seat changed. That made her feel so sorry for John.

Still Richard did not understand. It seemed just the other day that they had found the pussy-willows.

"I was a hundred in everything, today," he said, proudly, as he met her on the broad board walk which led from the school door.

She turned up her nose.

He resolved never to look at a lesson again in his life; and taking a "start," he ran at a terrible speed past her and leaped the school fence without touching it. The boys all closed around him and they made for the ball-grounds.

The lame boy cannot run at all. He must go on crutches all his life. All his life long!

But did she love him enough to marry him? Ruth questioned herself as she

walked slowly home. Well, Richard didn't care, anyway. If he did he would catch up with her the way he always used to. How far, far away those days seemed! Life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal. That was in one of their pieces. And if he chose to catch up with Lucy Stone, who cared? She would devote her life to John—and the poor. She would make the world happy.

She went to school early the next morning and fixed John's desk, before any one came. She waited and waited. Was he sick? Was he dead? At the last minute the boys came trooping in, and with them John.

He had no crutches! He ran!

Have you ever felt as if some one had come along and given the steady earth a twirl—like this? round and round!

"Ain't you going to be lame forever?" asked Ruth.

"Naw," he said. "I just fell downstairs and hurt my leg a little."

"I'll help you with your lessons," she offered at recess. (For he certainly was pale.)

"Bother!" he said. "I want to play," and he limped clumsily away to watch the boys running.

Richard won. He did not look at Ruth.

He looked at Lucy Stone. And that day he had his seat changed back. Ruth wrote a note to John. She was going to show Richard she didn't care. As the note flew across the aisle the teacher turned. She came and picked it up. Ruth's heart seemed to turn to stone.

"Who wrote this note?"

There was a deep silence in the room.

"The boy who wrote this note stand up, or I shall read it aloud before the whole school."

Ruth trembled. Her heart beat so loud she knew they would hear.

"I shall read it aloud, then," said the teacher, unfolding it. Ruth hid her face in her arms on the desk. How much can people bear and not die?

Richard rose into the aisle.

"So it's yours, is it?" said the teacher. He was made to stand up before the girls until school was out, the note in his outstretched hand.

He was laughed at now. He was shamed. And all for her. She longed to stand up with him before all the school —two outcasts!

After school he did not even look at her. He spoke to Lucy Stone again. (That made the third time he had spoken to her.)

Ruth never looked at the lame boy again. She would never look at Richard again, she said to herself. She walked away from school slowly, hoping he would catch up. She looked at the things in the fancy-store window, just glancing around once in a while. Perhaps the boys would not let him go home. They were pointing their fingers at him and saying, "S—s—shame!"

How could she keep on going to school if he never spoke to her? She remembered how the girls had giggled as he stood there, and her fists doubled up. "I will speak first," she determined.

It was just as well, perhaps, that she hadn't lingered in the school yard. The little boys never wasted their energies in remembering anything that happened in school. Richard had won at marbles, and passing by Lucy Stone, he had dropped his best two marbles for her. At last he started for home. He caught up with Ruth. (Are boys really monotonous?)

"Let's make up, Ruthie," he cried, gayly.

She felt hurt. How could he be so happy when a life of shame lay before them?

"Let's, Ruthie. Come on. Do!"

"Will you promise never to speak to Lucy Stone again?"

"Yes."

"And to Mary Steiner?"

"Upon my honor."

That sounded very nice. Ruth tried to think of something else she could make him do, but she could think of nothing.

They went and sat in the big swing which hangs from the apple-tree in Ruth's garden. He gave her his piece of carbon and all the marbles he had left, and she agreed to go get pussy-willows again. They were so happy that she wondered why boys ever quarrelled.

The Truce

BY MARIE MANNING

AT this late date, it is difficult to determine with any degree of certainty the exact causes that invested in Grace Marchmont the dictatorship of that portion of the neighborhood that was feminine and had not yet arrived at the years of discretion. But having once obtained control, by either force or strategy, she held the reins of government with no uncertain hand.

Grace shared the common lot of all who wear the mantle of authority; she had her good advisers and bad, her friends and enemies, her stanch supporters and sycophants; and she had privileges, too, that were part of the royal prerogative, and that went a long way towards mitigating the anxieties of office. One of these was the absolute confidence reposed in her regarding the amount of proffered delicacy she was to consume by that fixed standard of infantile hospitality known

as a "bite." No guardian thumb accompanied the pickle or stick of candy offered to the chieftainess for her refreshment. The treat was put into the royal hands without thumb or restriction, and the chieftainess, after biting off what good taste and appetite prompted, returned the delicacy to the frequently anxious subject with a "thanks."

It was, naturally, Grace Marchmont who, converting her own door-step into a chair of state, issued therefrom proclamations establishing the social status of all newcomers. Now it happened that into the corner house, which was the handsomest in the block, there had recently moved a family by the name of Tower, which numbered among its members two little girls, Alice and Eva. There was absolutely no reason, according to the grown-up tribunal, why the Tower girls should not, at once, have taken their places in the infantile aristocracy of the neighborhood. But the Towers, from at first hanging miserably to the fringe of society, were gradually shoved farther and farther away, till at last they found themselves beyond the Rubicon branded by the epithet "common."

Not one of the little girls who daily returned to the neighborly inquisition

could tell just how it was that the Towers came to be the object of their opprobrium. Some one's aunt—ensconced behind a shutter—had said, on the day of the Tower moving, that a certain blue velvet sofa was not just what might have been expected of people moving into "our" neighborhood. And the listening niece had reported the verdict, which had then been discussed, exaggerated, turned, twisted, and finally acted upon, with the resultant isolation of the Tower children as social pariahs.

The Towers, be it said to their credit, never tried to turn the tide of universal disapprobation. For two or three evenings they hung about the enemy's porch, bearing their dolls in their arms, in the hope that friendly overtures might begin through common maternal interests. But though the older residents would have been glad to know the names, at least, of these strangely beautiful dolls, there was the fact of the blue sofa barring the way to friendly intercourse. At first the little Towers, attributing the silence to shyness, and forlorn and homesick for the old neighborhood where they had been a power, lingered, hopeful and conspicuous, on the outskirts of this new social centre. But

when, one evening, they saw the aborigines whisper and giggle among themselves significantly, they indulged no further hopes of friendship, and departed with the dolls hugged close for comfort.

After this, feminine hostilities continued, day by day, in a species of guerilla warfare; no open engagement was fought, but the natives, with diabolical ingenuity, indulged in every species of persecution that was capable of escaping the censorship of parents and nurses, and soon the infantile population of the neighborhood found itself convulsed by a struggle none the less severe because its methods were covert and subtle.

For these little girls belonged to what are technically known as "nice" families, and did not dare exhibit their malevolence with the frankness of those children whose social position makes fewer demands in the way of convention and decorum. In charge of their elders or nurses they would walk past the Tower house with demure sedateness, scarcely glancing at the two little white figures perched in lonesome dignity on the porch; then, if there was no older Tower in sight, the vindictive native would look back, "make a face" at the loathed set-

tlers, and proceed on her way as if nothing had happened.

But the day of reckoning came and with it the fall of the chieftainess. While her word was law among her ladies-in-waiting, she occupied a position about her own back premises of no more importance than that of any other child. She would have liked to lord it over the servants, and receive delicacies from the cook with the same lack of thumb and restriction that marked the offerings of the faithful. In which case it is more than probable that the bite would have been taken with no restraining sense of *noblesse oblige*. But she possessed not the smallest sovereignty over these dominions, and was peremptorily ordered from the kitchen on wash-day, grudgingly given a bit of dough on baking-day, and, subject to the temper of the cook, permitted to scrape the bowl when cakes were in progress.

Between the chieftainess and Cindy, the colored housemaid, something approaching an understanding existed; due, no doubt, to the fact that both were outrageously bullied by Liza, the cook. Grace was sharpening a pencil with a silver dinner-knife one morning when Cindy came in from the grocery-store

where all the families of the neighborhood traded, with news that made the chieftainess bitterly regret the late hostility towards the Towers.

"Huccum you-all to gitter qua'lin' wif dem Tower chillun? You-all done miss it dis time, sho. Dey's gwinter give er party an' dar gal wuz upter de sto' dis mo'nin' buyin' razzins, an' nuts, an' aigs fo' de cakes; dey gwinter hev ten kin's er cake, dey gal tole me, an' ice-cream, all kin's, an' 'mos' eve'yt'ing else, I raikon, an' she say dar ain't one chile in dish yere neighborhood gwinter git ast, kase you-all done ack so mean to dem Towerses, an' she say dere maw am plumb tickle dat you-all don' play wif her chillun. Dere maw say you-all ain't 'sirable 'quaintances—dat's wot she say, —you-all ain't 'sirable 'quaintances," repeated Cindy, unable to leave the mouth-filling words alone after one repetition.

"I wouldn't go to their old party—we none of us would go to their old party, if they begged us," announced the chieftainess, in accents strongly tinctured with regret.

"Dat's easy talkin', w'en none of you-all's gwinter git ast. Dere gal say to me she gotter hurry 'kase she wuz spected ter 'sist in makin' de angel-cake."

"Are they going to have angel-cake?" asked the chieftainess, slicing the point off the pencil with one bitterly reckless stroke.

"Dey sutney is," said Cindy, her black eyes rolling with mischief.

"I hate angel-cake. I wouldn't eat it."

"Hit doan' look datter way w'en you-all gitten er chance ter eat any."

"I'm going out to play," announced the chieftainess with the habitual freedom of action that indicated there were no feminine relatives to be consulted. And she put on her best hat, for the same reason, and called together the clan.

Her news was received stoically; in truth, it was no news at all. Through the same medium of communication that had already put the chieftainess in possession of the facts, namely, that of the domestics who met and gossiped at the store, infantile circles knew all about the prospective party at the Towers's.

"I never had anything against the Towers," announced a little girl whose long yellow plaits were the envy of all her companions.

"Me neither," chimed in the one whose aunt had settled the social status of the Towers by her comment on the blue sofa.

"Why didn't you like 'em, Grace?" And this interrogation voiced the sentiment of the crowd in subtly attributing the unfriendly attitude taken by the older residents to the influence of the chieftainess.

"Yes, 'twas Grace that didn't like 'em."

"She never did like 'em."

"We never had anything against 'em," —came, successively, from these little girls whom Grace had always considered her stanchest allies.

The growing lack of loyalty smote the trained ear of the chieftainess. She had had enough experience as a leader to know that she could have stemmed the tide by turning to Lulu Waite with:

"You started it yourself when you said that your aunt said that their blue velvet sofa was—*impossible*."

But the chieftainess was too hurt. Turning on them, she delivered herself of one sentence of vitriolic import—"I'm sorry you don't get enough good things at home,"—and turned and walked to her own house without a second glance at her erstwhile faithful retainers.

When the evening of the Tower party arrived, the old residents, to a man, took to their individual porches and rocked

themselves with a splendid show of indifference to passing events. With the first gathering shades of dusk, they had seen Japanese lanterns begin to glow rosily from the Tower lawn, and a striped red and white tent spring into being with as much haste and mystery as if Aladdin's lamp had been in cooperation. Believe me, the old residents in their rocking-chairs were having a very bad quarter of an hour. Then they had seen Alice and Eva Tower, looking like beautiful Christmas-tree fairies in their fluffy little white skirts and crimped hair, stroll down to the front gate to meet their guests. The old residents could see that these came in bewildering numbers, some carefully alighting from family carriages, and some picking their way along the street with ostentatious daintiness.

When the sight of family carriages discharging their lovely burdens and fairy figures hurrying through the twilight could exact no further tribute of anguish from the old residents because there was no depth of wretchedness they had not already sounded, they forsook their little rocking-chairs for refreshment more substantial than the Dead Sea fruit of observation without invitation.

At this point, the chieftainess, who, from the security of her own porch, had been waiting for this exodus to supper, went into the house, and taking a newly wrapped parcel from under her own bureau, proceeded to examine its contents. At first glance this package appeared to contain caramels, wrapped neatly and exactly in oiled tissue-paper. Ostensibly, these belonged to that school of confectionery that requires first a layer of chocolate, then one of cream filling, then another of chocolate, the succulent compound being fashioned into perfect cubes, and wrapped, with the triangular ends of the paper beautifully folded under.

The making of these caramels had cost the chieftainess a morning and afternoon of the most arduous labor, not to mention several encounters with the cook incident to the purloining of the necessary kitchen utensils. But as she looked at them now, subtly, deliciously enticing as they were, she felt that her labors had indeed been repaid.

Putting the package under her arm, she left the house with the freedom of a man of the world. The family consisted of the chieftainess and her father, and neither asked questions as to the

comings and goings of the other. Skulking in the shadows cast by the now hostile porches of former retainers, the chieftainess gained the unguarded gate of the enemy and entered. Brave as she was, her skin rose up chill and prickly at the reckless enterprise on which she was now fairly launched. The gathering darkness seemed to hold a thousand foes in ambush; the very flowers, the grass, the gravelled walks, mocked her and threatened to call out the news of her alien presence. The overhanging eaves of the porch frowned menacingly, but she forged ahead, white-lipped, yet unwavering.

It was as she had expected; the company was at supper and the hall deserted but for Uncle Ben, the white-haired and faithful black retainer of the Tower family, who stood within the door waiting to receive belated guests and those Puritanical guardians of infant revelry who are the first to call for their charges on festal occasions.

"Come right in, little missie," said Uncle Ben, opening wide the screen door.

"No, thank you," said the chieftainess, so softly that the deaf old man had to incline his cotton-boll of a head to hear her. "I didn't come to go to the party,

but my ma sent these with her compliments."

"Who's yo' ma, honey?"

She hesitated. Like all criminals, she had forgotten to plan one little detail of her crime. "Her name is—her name is—Mrs. Jackson,"—and she flew down the porch and out of the gate as if a thousand witches were in pursuit.

Now the Towers had a grandmother, a peace-loving and kindly old lady who regarded with grief the infant factions that rent the neighborhood. She had been sitting in the darkened library and heard the conversation that accompanied the apocryphal Mrs. Jackson's donation. Not recalling a Mrs. Jackson among their acquaintances, she had gone to the window to have a look at Mrs. Jackson's little daughter, and there recognized the little girl who had been so unfriendly to her cherubic grandchildren.

"So she had come to make up—and very properly, since she was the primary offender. How delicate for her to run away so quickly. Since she had not been invited to the party, her presence would have been necessarily a trifle embarrassing."

So Grandma Tower took the "caramels," and told her daughter-in-law that

they represented a flag of truce, and the company helped itself to the peace offering!

"I don't like 'em! Oh! Sp—th—th! They're dirt! Dirt and starch! Sp—th—th! Oh, I want to go home! Oh, boo—hoo—hoo!"

Mrs. Tower, wildly promising to perform miracles with soap and water, led the weeping guests to the bath-room. The spirit of the party began to flicker out, as the chieftainess had foreseen it would, in an atmosphere of disappointment and bitter personal grievance.

But the chieftainess had reckoned without Mr. Tower and his administrative talents. This resourceful host turned the entire affair into a joke and proposed that every one should drown the noxious flavor of the peace caramels in brimming beakers of lemonade. The motion was carried, and when Mrs. Tower returned with a somewhat damp and chastened group she saw that the foundering party had begun to recover itself.

"Start up some rattling-good dance music,—and now who will be my partner for the lancers?" And soon the party was swinging in a hilarious rhythm.

Alice Tower, however, slipped away

from the dancers to the front porch, where she was presently joined by Eva and one or two tried friends, who discussed the strategic *coup* of the enemy, and ways and means by which it should be promptly avenged. From time to time the war-office on the porch was reenforced by those who were in the plot, and whispered councils continued.

Within, Dodsworth's Lancers wrought their accustomed sorcery, and little feet tripped in time with the rhythmic measure. Without, skulked the spirit of war, grim, ominous. History was repeating herself. Not since the Duchess of Richmond's ball on the eve of Waterloo had battle and revelry coquetted with such sardonic humor.

With the furtive caution of Indians, the council on the front steps disintegrated. "Broke up" fails to express the silent, catlike separation of the conspirators. First one little girl would slip away from the group and dart through the gate. Those left behind would chatter a little louder so that the single desertion could not be detected by any adult suspicious enough to have one ear on the alert. Then another would slip away, and the babel of tongues would be raised a tone with each de-

parture, so that the diminishing council of war made an ever-increasing crescendo of sound in proportion as it dwindled.

Finally, all had departed but one trusty conspirator, who stamped up and down the porch, holding animated conversation with herself, laughing stagily, and otherwise fulfilling the commands of the war-office to "Make as much noise as all of us put together till we come back."

The conspirators, reconnoitring on the sidewalk, fell into line and, headed by Alice Tower, began to march in the direction of the chieftainess's stronghold. They walked single file, numbering in all eleven calm, determined souls, seeking redress.

The chieftainess, after the deadly insult to her enemies, had again repaired to her own porch, where she sat and rocked herself in triumph. Alone, unaided, she had entered the fortress of the enemy, bearing in her hand the instrument of their shame and confusion. Her pleasant reflections were suddenly arrested, however, by a dread phenomenon that wound its way out of the twilight and down the peaceful street. The gathering darkness prevented her from

making out more than its frightful outline, but as it came nearer it seemed to be some hideous monster crawling towards her house on myriads of legs. She had never seen anything so terrible, not even in the circus posters whose pictured monstrosities kept her awake at night.

Little by little her eyes detected a growing familiarity in the general outline of the monster. She made out that the white body was composed of a single file of white skirts, and that the legs—the legs that had so terrified her—were the every-day legs of the Towers and their friends. But what were they doing, heading towards her house? On they came, unlatching her front gate, walking up her front lawn, and now they had begun to ascend her steps. The heart of the chieftainess knocked ominously against her ribs; true, she had taken these very liberties with their gate, their lawn, their front steps, but now there were so many of them,—it wasn't fair. To her terrified soul there seemed to be hundreds of thousands of calm, stiffly starched white figures swarming up her steps on some awful errand. She got up from her little rocking-chair and stood with her back fixed rigidly against

her own door-bell. They should not ring it, though they blast her!

"You-all go away now, right quick, or I'll unchain our dog."

"You-all haven't got a dog," said Alice Tower. "We've come to see your father."

"H-u-h!" said the chieftainess, but there was no contempt in the ejaculation, only terror lest her father, who was smoking his after-dinner cigar on the back porch, should hear the altercation through the open doorways.

The parley between the two leaders continued, the chieftainess, for purely selfish reasons, urging the Tower faction to depart in peace, though endeavoring to convince them that her advice was purely disinterested, and that her retainers stood ready awaiting the word from her to slaughter them on the spot.

The leader of the Tower faction stood firm as Gibraltar. She had come to see Mr. Marchmont, and did not intend to leave until she had accomplished her purpose. Low mutterings broke out in the ranks. A few insubordinates were for walking past the defenceless sentry into the hall.

The clamor grew and gradually reached the ears of the one being of whom

the chieftainess stood in awe—her father. He came forward to investigate, and found his porch swarming with little girls all eager to tell of some outrage that had evidently been perpetrated by his daughter. It was impossible to weigh the evidence with those excited children all talking at once. Mr. Marchmont decided upon the happy expedient of inviting the rank and file into the back garden and conferring on them the freedom of the peach-tree, while he led the way to the library with Alice and Grace.

Unconscious of everything but her wrongs, Alice Tower began her recital; but, as she continued, the nervous strain to which she had been subjected began to subside under the chilling influence of the sombre room in which she found herself. There were rows and rows of heavy books in dull bindings that emitted a faint musty odor unlike anything with which she was familiar, pompous mahogany furniture upholstered in black haircloth, dull rugs on the polished floor, and a tall clock that ticked ominously like the beating of a giant heart. There was not a single light or attractive thing anywhere to relieve the gloom of the place. It was precisely what she had

imagined a haunted house would be like, only infinitely more sombre. She looked first at the absolutely dignified man who listened to her with the deference he would have paid to her mother; and then at her former persecutor, now so white and cowering.

How different it was from her own home, where toys and children's belongings were everywhere, and the baby was always adding to the wholesome racket.

Then a great wave of pity surged up in her heart for her old enemy. Perhaps children who had no brothers and sisters and lived in houses like this couldn't help being bad,—perhaps they could not help it. The recital of wrong and grievance slowed down; it never reached the climax of the mud caramels. "And—and—that's all," she feebly concluded, when it reached the point where Grace sometimes made faces at them.

The chieftainess looked bewildered, then cried softly as one who is ashamed of her tears.

"I am sorry my little daughter has behaved so badly. What do you want done about it?" His voice was deep and solemn, not unlike the ticking of the clock.

The chieftainess turned to her enemy

and awaited the sentence, with eyes down and head averted.

"I think," said Alice, sweetly, "she ought to be made to make up with us and we all to be real good friends."

The chieftainess rose pink-nosed and penitent; and arm in arm they went in search of the invading enemy bivouacked under the peach-tree.

Ætat Ten

BY ETHEL SIGSBEE SMALL

IT was not that the boy's usual state was one of abject dirtiness—though, I regret to say, small credit is due him for the fact,—but there was at times a hasty look about him, an unconquered twist to his thatch of hair, a chapped condition of the hands that suggested washing, since washing must be, but no time spent in unnecessary wiping, a tilt to his necktie, a rusty aspect to his clothes—the newest of them acquired it in a week,—and perhaps, until his mother saw it, an area of darker hue extending backward from his ears and quite at variance with the soap-scrubbed territory before it.

So when he took his place at the dinner-table one evening splendidly arrayed in a spotless collar, red tie, and his best shirt, and when his head shone with a glory that comes only with hours of brushing and frequent wettings of

the brush, it was but natural some sensation should be produced.

"Ah, we have a guest to-night," remarked the big brother, bowing politely.

"If Henry would only *always* look like that," sighed the big sister.

"Henry washed his hands wif soap and cleaned his finger nails—I sawed him!" the very small sister testified, proudly. Which statement, though perhaps in a different way, produced as great an impression as the very small sister could have hoped for.

The boy was disposing of his soup noisily. He treated all alike with splendid indifference. When he had finished he pushed back his plate and addressed his mother:

"Mamma, can I have a magic-lantern show to-night?"

"Don't push your plate back, Henry dear. A magic-lantern show—to-night? Why, no, dear, of course not."

"Then can I go over to Willie's?"

"This is a lesson night, dearie. Mrs. Reed will not want you; and besides, you have your own lessons."

"Then can I ask Julie Clayton to go to the matinée, Saturday?"

"Julie Clayton?" asked the mother,

and the big brother exclaimed, dramatically:

"Ha-ha! a lady in the case! I thought as much!"

"Who is Julie Clayton, dear?" asked the mother, after a mental roll-call of all the boy's friends.

"She's a girl that's visiting Willie's sister." The boy consumed half a roll and two potatoes with the dexterity of a conjurer.

"Why *don't* you make him eat better?" asked the big sister, plaintively.

"How long have you known Julie? Is she a nice little girl?" went on the mother, calmly. She was too used to the big sister's appeals and her son's appetite for either to arouse in her any violent interest.

"This morning—she's fine," answered the boy.

"You mean you only met her this morning?"

"Good work," said the big brother, approvingly.

"I just saw her," said the boy. "She sat at the end of the schoolroom with Winnie."

"Can't he be made not to talk with his mouth full?" put in the big sister. "He's plenty old enough to eat properly."

"I eat ploperly," chirped the very small sister.

"Do leave the boy alone, dear," said the mother, her peaceful feathers ruffled for an instant; "the child must eat—he is hungry."

"Can't I take her, mamma?" The boy's beautiful unconsciousness of criticism was not assumed. He had long ceased to be affected by his sister's wailings, if indeed they had ever affected him. He was eating a large dinner and enjoying it. "Can't I?"

"Well, I don't know;—I don't know her mother," was the answer, hesitatingly given.

"Aw—I think you might," whined the boy.

"What do you think about it, Edna?" The mother turned to the big sister.

"Oh, let him go," said the big sister; "but you might impose the condition that he tries to improve his table manners."

"What do you think, Dick?"

The big brother wrinkled his forehead. "This is a matter of most vital importance," he said, gravely. "I should not like to give voice to an opinion rashly. I must first render myself up to thought. With your permission I will think aloud.

The first point to discover is if the lady is a fit companion for our darling. It might appear from our darling's own testimony that she is some species of siren, or at least closely related to that family, since she can sit at one end of a room, and without so much as addressing our son, win from him such admiration as to inspire him to perform matters of the toilet hitherto unknown to him—as proof of this we have our very small sister's testimony—and to make him wish to waste his substance in providing her pleasure.

"Having proved she is a siren, the questions naturally arise: Are sirens proper? Are they admitted into the best families? A point in the lady's favor is that thus far the influence exerted has been for good. To test the truth of this we have but to contemplate the victim. But is not any influence dangerous? Think what a power it will become when she holds speech with our brother; when to the fascination of her mind and person—I presume she is a beauty—is added the fatal power of propinquity! And now suppose she chooses to use her influence for ill—there are a number of pretty shady stories afloat about these ladies,—what

then? I ask you—what then? Would it be wise to risk our birdie with one about whose ancestry so little is known, so much rumored? If we could ascertain *absolutely* that she is an Episcopalian, but—"

"Can I go, mamma? Please let me," whined the boy. The discourse was lost upon him. His eyes were large and anxious. He resented only the interruption.

"Now, Henry, do not bother me," said the mother, with dignity. "I cannot tell you now; I will think it over." Thinking it over meant asking the grandmother's opinion in private.

The boy sighed and kicked the legs of his chair. Mothers were queer—there was no use talking. Why couldn't she say "yes," right off? He'd say "yes" if he were a mother. Only cost a dollar, anyway; nothing but a stingy little old dollar. She had a whole pocketbook full of 'em. He declined dessert, sulkily, and derived some small satisfaction from his mother's pained face as he held out against her urgings. The big sister said something about his being *made* to eat it, and he left the table with dignity—not forgetting to knock against her chair as he went by. Out in the hall the hot

tears rose. He didn't see why he couldn't do what he wanted to. Never could do a thing. She wouldn't tell him a word, not a teensy little old word—like "yes." Here Saturday was almost here, and it was such a bully show—performing bears and jugglers,—and he couldn't go! Even if he could, he didn't know it now. What was the use of anything if you couldn't know it now? Couldn't take a nice girl to the matinée. If he could he didn't know it. Mothers were queer and—and—*mean.*

A hand touched his arm.

"I've been thinking it over, Henry, and I see no reason why you should not take your little friend to the theatre. . . . It was very naughty of you to knock against your sister's chair. You must ask her to forgive you before you go to bed to-night. . . . Your dessert is waiting for you on the side-table. I told Kitty to put a little pitcher of cream there, too. . . . Brother will get the tickets for you to-morrow."

The boy gave a great whoop of joy and ran off down the hall. Then he came back and rubbed up against his mother's arm and asked her how she felt.

Mothers were all right, he reflected, over generous spoonfuls of pudding deli-

ciously mingled with cream; and he would ask his sister to forgive him; and, gee! Kitty did make good pudding—he wished he had another plateful.

It was not until the next morning that two joy-dispelling thoughts—the one insinuated by the big brother, the second the outcome of the first—entered the Eden of the boy's mind. Perhaps Julie Clayton might not want to go to the matinée, and if she did, perhaps her mother would not let her. The first difficulty was more easily disposed of than the second. The boy could scarcely grasp an idea which admitted of any one's declining to look upon performing bears and jugglers. But the second was insurmountable. It was a little way mothers had—this not letting fellows go places; and he supposed it was the same when the fellow was a girl. All at once happiness departed. He intended to ask Julie Clayton to go to the theatre, but he persuaded himself there was no hurry about it. That he knew himself a coward in no wise helped him. He pleaded "queer feelings" and stayed home from school.

Before luncheon-time he sincerely re-

gretted that he had not gone, extended his invitation, and had it over with. At luncheon his mother proposed he should go for the afternoon session and the queer feelings returned, threefold. With eloquence he analyzed his symptoms and dwelt pessimistically on probable consequences if he ventured out into the air. After luncheon he retired to the library and sat, grave-eyed and gloomy, revolving the situation. At three o'clock he would go over to the Reeds' and ask her. No, he thought he'd write a letter. No, that took too long; he'd go over after dinner. No, he'd wait and go to-morrow. He had just about decided to send his mother as proxy, when the maid ushered two callers into his presence.

They entered softly with feminine rustle. The one in advance was alluringly pretty, and flirted her skirts as she came, with inborn coquetry. The one behind walked stolidly, eyes to the front, head up, like a fat little soldier. She was a plain little girl, and as noticeably lacked airs and graces as the other overflowed with them. Confidently the pretty girl advanced; unquestioning, the plainer one followed. When the pretty girl stopped she stopped too, as if

"Halt!" had been ordered. Their destination was the boy.

"We've come to see you," said the pretty one, brightly. "This is Julie—my cousin Julie. She's visiting me. She's eight."

Julie said nothing.

"I've got some animal pictures," said the boy. He pulled a book down from a shelf and the three sat in a row on the sofa. "That's a tiger," explained the boy, "and that's a bear, and that's an elephant. Any one of them could eat you up." The ladies manifested a polite interest. The portrait of a large and thrillingly ferocious grizzly gave the boy a sudden inspiration. "I know where they have bears, right in this town," he volunteered.

"Oh, what a story!" laughed Winnie, the pretty girl.

"Yes, I do—at the vaudeville this week. And I'm going, and take somebody with me—a girl."

"Who is it?" asked Winnie, eagerly. "Me?"

"No," said the boy. He looked hard at the lady on his right. The lady on his right dropped her eyes; the lady on his left looked disappointed. "I'm going to take *you*," said the boy; then his fears

returning, he added, wistfully, "if you want to go, and if your mother will let you."

"Her mother isn't here," said Winnie. "My mother takes care of her while she's visiting me. But I'm sure mamma won't mind."

The boy glowed. Nothing now remained but to win the consent of the lady.

"Will you go with me?" he asked.

The lady on his right slipped down from the sofa. She drew up one shoulder and laid her cheek on it. Then she turned, very slowly, until a row of brown buttons and a small, tight pigtail faced the boy.

"She's bashful," explained Winnie, sagely. The boy looked blank.

"But I want her to go!" he exclaimed, his voice shrill with disappointment.

"I'll go with you," said Winnie.

"I don't want you," returned the boy. He looked anxiously at the stolid little figure before him. Then he spoke, addressing the pigtail. "Please go with me," he begged. "It's a bully show. They have jugglers and bears, just like you saw in the pictures, and a man walks on a wire. It's as good as a circus. You like circuses, don't you?"

The pigtail quivered.

"Then don't you want to go to something that's almost nearly exactly like one?"

The pigtail vibrated wildly.

"Wait; let me ask her," said Winnie. She fluttered past the pigtail and the six brown buttons with the air of a person going behind the scenes. "I wouldn't be silly," she advised in motherly manner.

"Tell her they have coon songs, too," put in the boy. The interpreter gave the message.

"Will she go?" the boy asked, breathlessly.

"I think she will," said Winnie; "she sort of nodded."

"Will you?" begged the boy.

The pigtail wavered; then faintly but unmistakably it bobbed!

"I guess we had better go now," said Winnie. "Take me to the matinée, some time, will you, Henry?"

"I don't know," said the boy. "If Julie stays here I'm going to take her every week."

"Well, take me when Julie goes home, won't you?" asked Winnie.

"Maybe," said the boy.

The callers went out softly, with

feminine rustle. The pretty girl flitted ahead; the plainer one trudged gravely in her wake.

"Good-by, Julie," said the boy.

"Good-by," said Winnie.

"There is a question worrying me," said the big brother, at dinner. "It is this: Are sirens dumb? In the legends we are led to believe the contrary, but I had the unequalled fortune to see a real siren to-day and overhear a conversation between her and two mortals, and since then my theories have been shaken. I am inclined to believe they have some method of signs, or silent speech, whereby they make themselves understood.

"An incident in proof of this: The siren accompanied by a mortal came upon me in the hall as they were leaving. It was a great occasion, but I rose to it. I bowed and asked them how they were. The mortal replied, 'How do you do?' as mortals have a way of doing, but the siren—the siren did something mysterious. She uttered no word, but gracefully elevated one shoulder and laid her cheek upon it, then wheeling slowly, gave me a rear view of her charming, if somewhat matronly, figure. And thus she stood until I bowed myself away. Will

some one versed in siren lore explain this?

"And still other problems harass me. I thought—I must have been mistaken—that I detected freckles on her nose. Do sirens have freckles? And are their noses ever of the genus known as pug? Also, is a small, tight pigtail the preferred arrangement for sirens' hair now, instead of the flowing tresses we have read about? These things trouble me. I hope you will pity my ignorance and enlighten it."

The big brother turned gravely to the boy. The boy looked up.

"Would you wear your best sailor suit or your new brown suit, if you were me and were going to the matinée?" he asked.

"Wasted," laughed the big brother.

It was Tuesday when the boy extended his invitation to Julie. For three days after, his most serious occupation in life lay in helping Saturday along. It required a great deal of helping. In ordinary weeks it came slowly enough, Goodness knows, but in this remarkable week it seemed likely to stop altogether. Scratching the days off the calendar with a pencil helped some, and counting the times you have to go to bed and get up

again was another way. Adding the number of breakfasts and luncheons and dinners you would eat before the magic day was perhaps the best way of all, provided their sum was not so great as to discourage you. The big sister's appeals grew more and more frequent. She could not understand the necessity for fast eating, even though it hastened the time for deducting one more meal from the list.

Besides helping Saturday, the boy spent much time perfecting his plan and elaborating it. He spent a quarter—his week's allowance—on a box of candy wherewith to refresh his lady and himself during the performance. His sister's reiterations that this was neither fashionable nor refined could not shake him. Julie would like it, he insisted; that was all that mattered. He also decided that he would like it, as he fondly lifted a chocolate cream to his nose, smelled it ecstatically, and replaced it.

This was to be no ordinary matinée. Ordinary matinées you were content with a glass or two of spring water, obtained after much beckoning from a haughty little boy who carried a wire basket. It really seemed as if lemonade were required at *this* matinée. The boy

pondered the question of taking some in a bottle—until he was answered by his mother. He decided, then, to compromise on a few lumps of sugar which could be carried in his pocket and slipped, quite easily, into the water the haughty little boy passed them. He decided this plan should not be endangered by unnecessary explanations.

Julie did not appear at school now. Winnie fluttered past him to her seat each morning, like a butterfly borne by a breeze, but no tight brown pigtail bobbed behind her. Once the boy passed her a note by a long and dangerous route of little boys and girls. The bell had rung for "quiet" and the teacher had mounted her wooden throne. Winnie made a screen of her curls, and read:

"Dear Winy,—Tomorrow is Saturday. Tell July I am coming at 1. Why doesn't she come to school with you any more? We are going to have candy and sugar in the water. Yours truly,

H. F. Clark."

To which Winnie replied:

"Dear Henry,—Jullie is too bashful to come. Mamma says she can go. She

is going to let her wear her best hat and have her hair hanging. What candy and sugar are you talking about? When are you going to take me?

Your loving friend,

WINNIE.

"P.S.—You spelled Winnie and Jullie wrong."

The boy missed in geography that day. Vermont was bounded on the north by flowing hair under a best hat, on the south by the hair and hat, and also on the east and west. "I forget," he mumbled, and after school attended a lecture on the sin of absent-mindedness, delivered to an audience of one. That night he was the victim of an experience, newer, and even more disagreeable.

He had gone to bed and lay, with wide-open eyes, fashioning delightful thoughts about the morrow. Over and over again the shaggy bears performed; over and over again he walked with careless ease down the theatre aisle, standing politely aside when he reached the seats to let the best hat pass in before him. He drank deep of the sweetened water and ate of the contents of a certain box, nobly passing by the big ones so Julie could take those. How fine and loud the

orchestra played, and what a funny fellow the black-faced man was! . . . Then all at once he became conscious that the house was still and the light in his mother's room out. The clock and he were the only two in the world!

He buried his head and tried to sleep, but he did not know exactly how it was done. He had never tried before. The shaggy bears, the funny black-faced man, the man with pink legs on the wire, Julie, and Julie's best hat, round and round they went in endless procession. Then he arose and woke his mother.

When he was cuddled in her great, smooth bed, and was telling her how Julie, and the bears, and the man's pink legs had kept him awake all night, off he went drifting into a wonderful dream, where all three were wonderfully mingled; and he did not hear the clock's big voice boom out ten times.

To-day was Saturday. The boy's joy took form in strange, unmusical cries and much thumping of feet and furniture. He imitated a dog barking as he dressed; then he imitated a cat; then he imitated the two together, and felt indignant and surprised at his family's lack of appreciation.

His sister held up her watch at him as he entered the breakfast-room. "You'll be late for school," she warned. He looked at her in amazement. Was it possible any one did not know to-day was Saturday?

He spent a great part of the morning arranging and rearranging his box of candy and asking what time it was. Also he made frequent excursions to the sugar-bowl in the breakfast-room, and a certain small paper bag swelled correspondingly. That peculiarly moist and sticky condition of the boy's mouth attendant, ordinarily, on these journeyings was lacking to-day. No sugar for him — he was "saving up."

At eleven his mother, wrought to an exquisite pitch of nervousness, said "yes" to a question repeated each half-minute, "Is it time to get dressed now?" and for a while peace reigned. This second toilet was too serious to admit of barking or mewing, or even thumping. The mother wondered absently if it was Sunday, the house seemed so still.

At half past eleven he was dressed and (Herculean task for the child!)—waiting. He squirmed on the edge of the hall chair, facing the clock, until his mother took pity on the tense face and

anxious eyes, and brought down a book to read to him. Going to him was inevitable, since he could not be induced to leave the clock.

At last he interrupted a stirring chapter with the awesome intelligence that it was "time." He bade his mother goodby with dignity befitting the occasion and stepped out into the sunshine, his mother watching him as he went down the street. It was only a ten-minute walk, but his gait was somewhat faster than a trot, though not quite a gallop. It is certain he would have arrived early, but for the paper bag, which turned traitor, and the time consumed in lifting each precious lump from the dust and wiping it on his pocket handkerchief. So at one o'clock exactly he stood on his lady's doorstep, his eyes shining, his face a small red sun from heat and happiness. He clutched the box of candy in one hand—the unruly sugar had been relegated to his pocket—and with the other rang loudly, as befitted a successful swain.

"Rrr-rr-rr-rr!" Then he rang again out of sheer gladness, a sort of tattoo this time.

"She ain't in," said the maid, some-

what acidly; perhaps the tattoo had not been to her taste.

The boy explained all over again, with cheerfulness. It was Julie he wanted to see—they were going to the matinée. Would she—

"She ain't in," said the maid.

Something inside the boy struggled, then sank.

"Is—is Winnie in?"

"No, Miss Winnie's out; everybody's out. Miss Winnie's aunt, she's in, but she don't want to see anybody."

The boy made one gigantic effort. "Can—can I wait for Julie to come back?" he asked. He spoke meekly. On this dark but potential being's answer hung his fate.

"Come in," said the maid, ungraciously.

She left him standing in the hall, facing the clock. Then she came back and told him not to touch anything, and to stay right where he was; needless advice, this. All the king's horses could not have driven him from that clock.

He waited until the little hand had crept around to two and the long slim hand stood on twelve; until the sun had left the ferns in the window and reddened the curtains between the parlor doors;

until the pink man had mounted the wire and the bears were getting ready to perform.

The mother paused in her sewing to gaze at a small figure standing on the threshold of her door.

"Why, what—" she began, in amazement; and then stopped.

After all, there is nothing so good for that deep-down ache as a hand smoothing your hair and two arms about you; nothing quite so good for that great, sore lump as—big boy as you are—a cry on mother's shoulder.

Sunday passed, and a stormy Monday kept the boy at home. On Tuesday he went to school.

It was early. The boy came in leisurely. It was perhaps his first experience in entering the schoolhouse in that manner. Ordinarily a mad dash was all that saved him. He glanced at the clock and sat down in surprise.

The room was empty save for a little group at the farther end. They were all girls, and their high-pitched voices reached the boy.

"Where's Winnie, anyway? She wasn't here yesterday."

"Don't you know? She's gone away!"

"Gone away?"

"Yes, gone away. She went yesterday with that cousin of hers. She's going to visit her. You remember her cousin, don't you? She came to school with Winnie one day. She was awful bashful, and wore her hair in one real tight braid. Don't you remember, Rosy?"

Rosy remembered. The boy remembered, too.

The children were beginning to straggle in; each new arrival entering faster than the last as the hour grew later. Soon the room rang with merry voices, the clatter of dropping books, the slamming of desk lids. "Where's Winnie?" each little girl arrival would ask, and the little girl who knew would explain.

The boy sat still. He did not join in the general chat, or even in the slamming of desk lids. He sat still and drew pictures on his slate. He was glad of it, he told himself. He was glad Julie had gone, and he was glad Winnie had gone with her. He didn't want to know why Julie hadn't been there when he called for her. He didn't care about Julie, anyhow. He didn't care a cent.

The week passed slowly. The boy turned his thoughts to deciding the deli-

cate question of how old Sarah would be if Frank was eleven and one-third years old, and John three and one-half years older than Frank, and Sarah five and seven-eighths years older than John. At times he worked faithfully, but on occasions it required nothing less than the teacher's voice to bring his straying thoughts back to Sarah.

Another week dragged by, and it was at the beginning of a third that an unusual twittering in the rear of the schoolroom told the boy Winnie had returned. Doggedly he kept his eyes ahead—not even the friend of his Delilah would he recognize; but Winnie was of the kind not easily repulsed. She gave him a friendly nod and smile as she passed on her way to the blackboard, and in coming back laid an envelope on his desk.

It was a pink envelope. Across its middle was his name, in spreading, rounded characters. All the little girls in school wrote that way—Nellie, Fannie, Lillie, Pollie,—all of them. And all the little boys wrote that way, too. He might have supposed the note to be from Winnie herself, but for the envelope. The notes you got in school never boasted envelopes. All at once the boy began to suspect the truth.

The teacher was explaining the rules for the subtraction of fractions, with her face towards the blackboard. She seemed lost in her subject. The boy drew the note closer. Then cautiously holding it on his knee, where the desk served as a screen, he slit the envelope.

Inside was a little pink letter, with a picture of a little girl feeding two fat geese stamped on top of the page.

The boy read:

"Dear Henry,—You said they was bears there and I am afraid of bears cause they is wild. So I went out and hid in the yard that day you were comming. And after you went I came back. I am comming to see Winnie another one time. Please don't take me to vordvil, will you? Please write me some letters and I will write some. Lets you and me write to just us. I think you are a nice boy but please don't go to the vordvil where the wild bears is. Good-by. Please write me a letter soon.

Your sincerely friend,
Julia Claton."

Later in the day the teacher smiled approvingly as her eyes fell on the boy's brown head bent low over his desk. Be-

fore him lay an open book. He was writing diligently. She reflected that Henry was trying to do better; she would give him "Fair" instead of "Poor" this month.

The boy wrote on, head twisted, brows bent, his protruding tongue following the efforts of the pen on the paper. Now and again he would stop and nibble his penhandle; then on again, painfully, laboriously. He was writing his first love-letter.

An Unskilled Laborer

BY MAY KELSEY CHAMPION

THE coming home after your first long visit away is a wonderful experience. There are so many surprises. The rooms are larger or smaller—it depends upon where you have been,—but new, anyway, and strange, and far, far pleasanter than anything you have seen in your travels. The stairs are farther from the door, the fireplace tiles are green—you had thought that they were blue,—and even the sitting-room clock strikes differently.

Graham Lee found that he had forgotten a good deal in the two weeks that he had been with his aunt in Lenox. He had forgotten how warm and bright and fragrant the front hall was when you came into it just after dark on a cool evening. He had forgotten how straight and tall his father was, and how deep and pleasant his voice sounded when he spoke. And then, oh, then,

with his arms about her neck, he found that he had forgotten just how beautiful —how *beautiful*—his mother was!

Even Cummings seemed to have learned more agreeable ways in the two weeks, and that first night at dinner did not push Graham's chair so close to the table that his elbows hit when he ate—which is very uncomfortable when your feet do not touch the floor and you cannot push the chair back without getting out entirely. Cummings even noticed at once when Graham's glass was empty, or when he wanted more of anything, which was a great improvement in Cummings.

Graham felt that it was good to be at home again and have everybody so glad to see him.

And then, after dinner, to sit by the fire, very close to his mother, with his hand in hers! There was company—a man who had dressed up in old clothes and gone all around getting work in factories and mines and lumber-camps and places, to see how that kind of people lived, and was going to write a book about it,—so they could not talk much; they had to listen to him; but they smiled at each other very often. Nothing that he had known while he was

away had been like this! Sometimes he would go over and sit on the arm of his father's chair. Of course he did not take his hand. Men didn't. But he would lean against his shoulder for a while, and then, by and by, he would come back to his mother.

Oh, but it was fine to get home!

And the next morning, to go around and see the fellows, and after he had made sure that they regarded him a little differently for his having been away, to let them see that he was unchanged in spite of it!

Oh yes, it was great, being home!

But it does not take long for the newness to wear off, and by noon of the day after his return Graham had reached that restless period which is between the excitement of the arrival and the taking up of the old manner of life.

He went to his room after luncheon and considered what there was to do. School would begin Monday, so he felt that he must not waste the afternoon. As he looked across the park he could see the men at work on the new extension of the Chaloner Museum of Art. It must be very hard to work all through the summer vacation, but a good many people had to,

Some of the stories that Mr. Leiter had told the night before were very interesting. He must have had a great many experiences. Graham thought that he would like to read his book when it was printed. It was a fine thing to go around and study the lives of the working-people and tell about them and try to ameliorate their conditions. He had never thought of it before.

He looked over toward the red brick walls of the museum and wondered if there were any labor conditions over there. But of course there were; Mr. Leiter found them everywhere.

Graham rose. He knew what he would do. He would put on his overalls and old cap and go over there and ask for work and study labor conditions. Then he would write a composition about them. There was always a composition to write as soon as school began.

As he walked across the park he felt more and more the loftiness of his purpose. In his composition he would fearlessly expose any wrong that he might see,—any oppression,—and perhaps he might do a great deal of good.

He asked the first workman that he saw if he could get a job. He disliked the word, but it seemed to him the one

to use. The workman looked up from the mortar he was mixing, surveyed Graham for a considerable period, then indicating with a turn of his thumb a man who was carrying bricks, replied that he must ask him.

Graham applied to the man with the bricks, only to be referred to another man who was looking out of a window in the second story. The man in the window sent him down to the cellar, where he was passed from one to another among the plumbers, and then directed to the carpenters up-stairs, to meet with a similar experience.

It was not until after his fourteenth interview that the conviction reached Graham that he had been imposed upon, and was the victim of a general joke. He was walking slowly down one of the corridors of the main building at the time, and it brought him to a sudden pause. From his observations that afternoon it began to appear to him that the laboring-man's condition did not so greatly need ameliorating. There seemed to be a good deal of resting and whistling and sitting on boxes and waiting for somebody else, in the building trades at least.

He passed on to the other corridor,

where the pictures hung. Here some one had begun cleaning the brass railing that guarded a Rembrandt at the end. A cloth and a box of paste lay on the floor. Graham picked them up and began to rub. No one came to interfere, and he could at least feel like a workman and get his hands soiled with labor.

He had given himself up to the enjoyment of a lavish expenditure of strength and paste, when he heard voices behind him. In the next alcove Mr. Henry Chaloner, the founder of the museum, was talking to the curator.

"Yes, I have decided to take the trip around the Horn," he said, "so the pictures will remain here for some time—indefinitely, in fact. Ultimately, I suppose that I shall give them to the museum. You might tell Finch to change that Corot over to the other side, Mr. Torrey, and move the Diaz nearer the window. The light will be better on both. Don't you think so?"

Mr. Chaloner moved from one picture to another. They belonged at the house, but as there was no one there but himself now he had allowed them to be brought over to the museum for a while. He paused again before the Corot—a large canvas, full of the tender, shim-

mering, silvery green of spring-time. Isabel had chosen that. He remembered so well her delight in it. That was in their own spring-time.

He sighed and turned to the next alcove, where Graham, in his old cap and blue overalls, was polishing the brass railing. Mr. Chaloner regarded him with interest.

"Good afternoon," he said, after a few moments. "I didn't know that Harrison had so young a man on the force."

Graham removed his cap and said, "Good afternoon," then fell to work with all his strength upon a speck of tarnish.

He knew that this was Mr. Chaloner, giver of the museum and owner of the great Chaloner Mills. It was a meeting of employer and employed at the utmost extremes of the scale of labor—a situation that would have been full of opportunity for Mr. Leiter. He would have known what to say. Graham did not.

He rubbed as long as he could on the rail, Mr. Chaloner watching him the while with embarrassing steadiness; then he stopped to breathe.

"Do you have to work, my boy?"

"I thought I would," replied Graham, after a deep suspiration.

"But you ought to be in school."

"This is vacation—sir." Graham began to rise to his part. "I go to school almost all the time. It's only vacations and Saturdays that I can work at my—my trade."

"And what do you call your trade?"

"Unskilled labor," replied Graham. Mr. Leiter had used the phrase several times during the evening before, and he rather liked the sound.

"Oh!" Mr. Chaloner laughed. "It's a trade that's rather crowded, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir." The words were very respectful.

"And what are you going to be when you grow up?"

Graham hesitated. For a long time it had been a bright dream of his to be one day a pugilist—a gentlemanly one, of course; he did not see why that might not be. But he had mentioned it once to his mother, and she had begged him, in great distress and with tears in her eyes, never to let her hear the word again. Graham had pronounced it "puggerlist"—with the hard *g*. He had felt obliged to give it up, but nothing that he had thought of since seemed so alluring. The pause grew embarrassing. He disliked to say he didn't know, for

Mr. Chaloner would not understand, and might suppose that he had never thought about it. Besides, he always hated to say he didn't know to anything. Graham's writing was bad, and he had been obliged to copy a certain line of Pope's twenty-five times one day at school. He remembered it now.

"An honest man," he offered, hesitatingly. Perhaps it would do.

"Well, there's plenty of room in that profession, at least." Mr. Chaloner leaned against the rail as if he meant to stay for a while.

"Yes, sir," said Graham, very respectfully, as before.

"Doesn't your father work?"

"Oh yes. Very hard. He works in a —er—mill." Graham saw the chance for an artistic touch and availed himself of it. Once or twice of late his father had referred to his business as a treadmill. "But it takes a great deal to support us. I'm a great expense. I wear out my clothes and I eat a great deal."

"So you try to help him." Mr. Chaloner regarded him with approval. "It does you much credit."

It did not seem to Graham that it was quite fair to his father to leave it that way, and it made him feel uncom-

fortable to receive credit that did not belong to him. For a moment he thought of explaining things to Mr. Chaloner, but the afternoon was half over, and he had not yet learned anything about labor conditions that he could put into a composition. Besides, Mr. Leiter never explained. Graham didn't see how he could have kept from it sometimes without feeling mean.

"I'd like to help him," he replied, truthfully. "He says I do help him in a good many ways. He's the *best* father! I've seen quite a good many fathers—other fellows', you know." Graham raised his face and spoke with great earnestness. "I've just been away, and we missed each other a great deal. Every Sunday afternoon we go for a long walk in the country and talk about things."

"What do you talk about?" It was taking an advantage, but Mr. Chaloner looked down into the eyes that were gazing back at him all alight with affection. He was growing interested in this boy, who must be the child of one of his own mill-hands, it appeared.

Graham considered. Some questions sounded so easy and were so hard to answer.

"Quite often," he began, slowly, still trying to select—"quite often we talk about what we would do if things happened."

"How do you mean?" Mr. Chaloner pursued, still leaning against the rail and watching the boy intently.

"Well, like this," replied Graham,—"What would you do if you were writing your geography examination and heard a boy behind you whisper the answer to a question before you were quite sure whether you knew it yourself?"

"What would you do?"

"I wrote: 'Zambesi. I think I knew it, but I heard Harold Dodge whisper it, too.'"

Mr. Chaloner nodded.

"Then sometimes he asks my advice about things—real, grown-up things, you know." Graham stood very straight and told it proudly. "Of course he doesn't expect me to know always, and I make mistakes, and he laughs. But I tell him what I think I'd do. We have splendid times; and he knows all the birds and almost all the wild flowers."

Mr. Chaloner turned away and began looking at the pictures. His own boy, George, was about the age of this little fellow in the blue overalls. George was

away at school, and it had seemed best to keep him there, even through the last vacation.

"Do you like these?" Mr. Chaloner asked, when he had made half the circuit of the alcove.

"I like the light-colored ones and the ones you can look at close to," replied Graham.

"So do I," said Mr. Chaloner. "I think our tastes must be similar."

"Do you like posters?" inquired Graham. "Father brings me home all the good ones, and I'm making a collection. I think collections are interesting, don't you? I have a good many—stamps and postal cards and minerals and such things."

"This is the only collection I have," said Mr. Chaloner. "I enjoyed making it, but I'm thinking of giving it away now."

There was a weariness in his words which even Graham recognized.

"It's a very nice one," he said, encouragingly. "Sometimes I get tired of my collections, but I put them away, and after a while I get interested again. Perhaps you will."

"Perhaps." But there was no warmth in the tone.

"That's quite a pretty one." Graham

indicated a small landscape by Constable. "It looks like a place where father and I went fishing last summer, when he took his vacation. It looks quite a good deal like it." Graham regarded the canvas critically. "We camped out for two weeks—just us two."

His voice thrilled and his eyes were shining at the joyful recollection as he looked up. "We had such a good time!" he said, with a happy sigh.

Mr. Chaloner smiled back at the bright, upturned face.

"I hope you can go again next summer," he said; and he held out his hand.

Graham looked at his. It was soiled and sticky with the paste.

Mr. Chaloner looked also and laughed, but he did not withdraw his hand.

"I don't mind," he said, courageously.

"I think I'd rather wash them," suggested Graham.

"All right."

The giver of the Chaloner Museum of Fine Arts waited while the young unskilled laborer in blue overalls went off down the corridor in search of water and a towel.

In a short time Graham returned, and presented a hand that was clean, though still a little damp from hurried drying.

Mr. Chaloner held it in a close grasp for a moment.

"Good-by, my boy, good-by," he said. "I hope we'll see each other again."

Mr. Henry Chaloner walked slowly down the gray marble stairway of the museum and across the park to his home.

Not a sound greeted him as he opened the door. He was used to that, but to-night the house seemed more than usually still.

Leaving his hat and coat in the hall, he went into the library to wait until dinner should be ready. He did not trouble to dress when his wife was away.

The library was still, too, except for the steady and monotonous blowing of the gas-log in the fireplace.

His mail was waiting on his desk, but he did not approach it; neither did he take up the paper which lay on the table.

Crossing the room, he sat down before the fireplace. For some time his gaze followed the irregular line of small flames—always the same line! How tiresome a gas-log was! And they had given up their old friendly wood fires for it. Something that was real, for a hollow semblance! He smiled a little bitterly. A wood fire was almost human in its companionship.

He wished that he had brought that little fellow in the blue overalls home to dinner with him. The child had interested him. He reminded him a good deal of George, too. And how the boy had run on about his father! He wondered what George would have found to say to a stranger about his father. Perhaps he never spoke of him at all. They seldom saw each other.

The man moved uneasily in his chair.

He had thought that he was doing what was best for his child. He had given careful consideration to the school he had placed him in. It was one of the best in the country. But he knew what he would like. To-morrow would be Sunday. He would like to take a walk into the country with him—and talk about things—like that little fellow and his father. How proudly the boy had told of his father's asking his advice sometimes! He would like to do that, too.

He had never meant to neglect George. But to-night he was conscious of a need of him, a longing for his presence, which he had never felt before. He wondered if George had ever felt a need of him. The thought made him stir again, uncomfortably.

He bent forward and turned out the gas.

The father of that little fellow at the museum was one of his own mill-hands, it seemed. If so, he would be out of work next Monday. He hoped that it would not make any difference with the boy. He would try to see that it did not.

There would be twelve hundred or more other men out of work as well, many of them with children too. He regretted it. He had told Shipley that from the first. But Shipley had said that the mills were running behind, and they would have to shut down for a few months.

He had never interested himself very much in the mills, which had been his father's pride, and while Montgomery was in charge there had been no need.

He could not remember that Montgomery had ever shut down, except for a few days at a time, for repairs or new machinery. The Chaloner Mills had a wide reputation for steadiness, and had run on full time through several seasons of trade depression and more than one actual panic.

It had been his father's wish that he should one day take charge of the mills himself, but he had hated them and kept as far as possible from their clatter.

An hour, a half-hour, and another hour sounded from the clock on the mantel.

Henry Chaloner sat before the fireplace surveying the perspective of past years. They had not been very useful years. His father's life of steady, earnest toil stood out in sharp contrast. But he had not needed to work like that. He could scarcely spend the money now, though he gave away large sums each year.

Giving—yes, he believed he had given rather generously. Perhaps there was a little that was worthy in his life, after all. Then he was ashamed. What was it that he had given? Something that he did not want himself, and had never earned. His hands had never touched belt or pulley. He looked at them curiously. It was the toil-hardened hands of twelve hundred other men that had made his giving possible—the hands of the men he was planning to turn off on Monday.

In his desk was a letter offering fifty thousand dollars to the town of Conway for a library. Conway was his father's birthplace, and he had always meant to do something for it. He had written the letter that morning.

For a while longer he sat considering. At last he rose. Something of the old Chaloner resolution had been reborn within him.

Going to his desk, he found the letter and dropped it into the waste-basket. Conway would have to wait a year or two.

Then he went out in the hall to the telephone.

"Oh, Shipley," he called, over the private wire, "I've decided to put off shutting down for a while. I'll see you early Monday morning."

Returning, he sat down to his mail, running it over rapidly at first to select what appeared most important.

One of the letters he opened with a hurried, nervous movement.

There were many sheets of fine, heavy paper, and the cipher was I. V. C., in silver.

The lines in Mr. Chaloner's face deepened as he read the loosely written pages, one after another telling of the brilliant events that were filling the days and nights at Lenox—accounts of dinners and house-parties; long paragraphs of names made familiar by the Sunday newspapers:

"It is all very gay and pleasant

enough," he read at last, "but I am getting tired of Lenox, perhaps, and I am coming home, Henry.

"Have you fully decided upon the trip around the Horn? If, for any reason, you should have given it up, I believe I should not go to New York this winter. I have seen enough of New York here at Lenox, and it seems to me that I should like to be at home. We have never tried a winter there.

"But perhaps you would not care for it. And then, you must not change your arrangements. I do not forget how consistently you have kept your part of our agreement of three years ago not to question or interfere with each other's purposes or decisions in any way, and I should not like you to give up the voyage if you would enjoy it.

"If we were to be at home, I should like to send for George. The school may not be so good there, but we could try it for a while. It is a long time since we had him with us.

"I am afraid that I have not been a very good mother to him.

"There has been a child up here—Mrs. Cornwallis's nephew, Graham Lee. He reminded me a good deal of George. And he was constantly talking of his

mother in such a beautiful way. I think it was hearing him that has made me see, for I know that George could never talk of me in that way.

"And it is not toward him alone that I have failed, Henry. I have seen that, too. And because I have seen, it almost seems to me that if I came home now I could go back to those other, better days —that we could begin some things differently, and find again something of that which we have lost.

"I am coming on the half past four train Monday. ISABEL."

Henry Chaloner read the sheet a second and a third time.

It was not a dream. These were words on paper, and the paper rustled as he turned the page.

For a long time he sat motionless in the empty, silent room, his head resting upon his hand. It was he who had been wrong those many times—he who had failed toward both her and the child.

Remorse, bitter memories, hope, stern determination to do a man's work in the world henceforth, prayers of thanksgiving, prayers for help—all these swept his soul by turns.

If he could ever tell her!

But she was coming Monday. Monday! A great gladness overcame all the rest.

Suddenly he rose. He would go to her to-night. He could reach her in a few hours, and they would come home together.

Graham Lee sighed as he went upstairs that night. He had been listening again to Mr. Leiter's experiences. And they were such interesting ones!

Graham had scoured the brass railing at the museum until the last man left the building, but he had not had any.

He had not been able to learn anything about labor conditions or to ameliorate anything. It was very hard when you wanted to so much.

A Doll

BY ALICE MacGOWAN

EVERY time the wagon went to Antelope from Three Sorrows ranch the little girl had been promised a doll. The promise was freshly made when came the journey to the larger and more distant town of Amarillo—a business trip, but father would find time to look up the biggest doll there and bring it to her. And again the childish hope was disappointed; again the careless, irresponsible, doting father, who would not for the world have struck his motherless child or allowed any pain to come near her which he could himself prevent, unconsciously pierced her to the heart.

But now the long-talked-of pilgrimage to Fort Worth was at hand. And now father was actually off; and now the beautiful doll was certain to come home with him!

The evening of Van Brunt's departure

—and every evening after that till the momentous one which brought the traveller back—Hilda crept up into the lap of old Hank Pearsall, the ranch boss, to tell him over and over how long the doll was to be, how blue its eyes, how golden its hair, and what pretty tan shoes and white kid hands it should have, what dainty garments it should wear. The old cattleman had taken the forlorn pair—the small child and the father, a New York club-man, almost as helpless as she—into his big, fond, empty heart. Of Hilda he had made an especial pet, teaching her a new name for himself, and adopting the title of Petty as his own designation for her. "So long, Uncle Hank—oh, every bit this long! See? And blue eyes—like yours, Uncle Hank; not black, like mine and papa's," she would urge.

And Uncle Hank's admired blue eyes would dwell upon her a little anxiously. His last words to the young employer as he handed up his valise at the train (he had driven Van Brunt sixty miles to Antelope himself) were, "And, Charley, whatever you do, for the love o' goodness don't forget Petty's doll." Now, shrinking in mind from the thought of that possibility, but absolutely incapable

of communicating his dread to the child, he would say:

"Um—Petty—w'y, Fort Worth, ye know—Fort Worth ain't New York. Hit ain't gwine to be no stavin' big doll; no such doll as you had before you come out to Texas. I don't reckon hit 'll be—"

Hastily she would interrupt him, declaring, vehemently, "Oh, Uncle Hank, it's goin' to be very beautiful!" And once more the eager, excited, childish tones would catalogue the list of the coming doll's charms.

When Charley Van Brunt got to Fort Worth, it was the history of his New York life over again—that life from which the young wife had thought to save him when she fled with him to the big Texas Panhandle ranch. And now there was the added pressure upon his weakness of a bereaved and forlorn condition—for his life since her death at Denver, on the way out, had been a thing unsupported; moreover, there went with him the depressing knowledge that he was making failure after failure at the ranch. He was to have been gone four days; it was ten, and he had not returned. There had been an address left, that of the hotel where he should stop. The ranch boss wrote again and again;

even Hilda, with Uncle Hank guiding her little brown fingers, struggled through a small, soiled sheet of hieroglyphics. And when there was no answer, the old man sent Shorty, one of the cowboys, to Antelope with a telegram prepared, entreating an immediate reply. But none came. No message of any kind came back from Fort Worth. Old Hank, smiling and cheerful, carried a very anxious heart.

At the end of two weeks Van Brunt came home. A gentleman—oh, most certainly a gentleman, always; never less than that; but looking strangely shabby and out of countenance. He was much thinner than when he went away, and much less sunburnt, and he had forgotten most of the matters which had taken him to Fort Worth.

The child, who for days back had scouted continually the long box-elder avenue leading up from the main trail to the low stone ranch-house, met the buckboard far down below the big gate. The father stopped the galloping ponies with an arm thrown out across the driver's hands, caught up the little figure and hugged her warmly to his heart, covering her small face with kisses.

"Did she think daddy had just run

away and left them all? Well, daddy was very busy; he—he had such a lot of tiresome business." And reaching down into his vest pocket, Van Brunt brought out and gave to the child a five-dollar gold piece.

In silence and in some apprehension Hilda looked at the coin lying in her little brown palm—as unavailable to her, as valueless in her eyes, as a yellow button. He had given it as though it were a precious thing; and Hilda just glimpsed the terrible thought that it might be meant to supersede the doll. No, no—that could not be—that was intolerable! She pushed the idea away from her as she sat (so quiet-seeming to the careless eye, but in truth in such a tumult of choking emotion) upon her father's knee.

Shyly and unobserved, she examined the contents of the buckboard. There was nothing whatever but her father's valise; not a big valise, either, and her hopes and expectations shrank. It would be a small doll; she saw that she must bring her desires down to that, and she did so. But she asserted passionately to herself that it was there—it was in the valise. No doll at all!—oh, it was impossible—it was not conceivable! She

shrank in panic from the suggestion. Heaven would not permit such a cruel thing as that.

Poor little girl! The Providence of neglected children had found it necessary to deal unto Hilda's lot many things which the unthinking would readily call cruel; yet it was characteristic of her trusting, hopeful nature that she believed unfalteringly in the goodness of Heaven, the potency of her star.

Headquarters reached, old Hank came, and Shorty and Buster—all the masculine household; there was a good deal of hesitating, embarrassed conversation; questions, with answers eagerly hasty and voluble, or hesitant and awkward; long pauses, covered by an uneasy laugh or some irrelevant statement or inquiry.

While this was going forward, the child stood about, in one obscure corner and another, watching, longing for the moment when that wonderful valise should be opened; amazed that all this delay, this waste of time and talk, should be indulged in, when The Important Things of Life were waiting in that mysterious casket. During one of these uncomfortable pauses her father's troubled eye caught sight of the little figure lingering at the door. He reached for

her and lifted her high in his strong arms, saying, laughingly:

"What is it now, my small daughter? Did you want to ask daddy something? Is there something Hilda wants to know of father?"

This was a strange, an ominous sort of inquiry; and Hilda could barely choke out the two words, "The doll," in such a little, whispering, flatted voice as failed to make its way across the short distance from her trembling lips to her father's ear, and he had to ask her over more than once.

His face fell, almost comically. A look of pain and shame flashed over it. It was plain (at least to everybody there except poor Hildegarde, who still clutched tightly a tiny shred of hope) that he had never thought of the matter since the moment of uttering his careless promise.

"Why, dear," he faltered, painfully, setting her gently down, "I completely for—"

Old Hank Pearsall's eyes were watching her in deep concern. This was what he had dreaded. Now he shook his head warningly at his employer, over the little girl's, and interrupted in a curiously significant tone:

"W'y, ye see, honey, hit 'll be a-comin' along with the freight stuff when—"

"No, Hank," broke in young Van Brunt, in fresh distress, not perceiving the innocent fiction, but supposing that the old man was expecting those articles which Charley was to have purchased and shipped to the ranch—"no, Hank, there aren't any things coming by freight."

It was too late. Hank could cover nothing now; the bitter truth was evident, even to poor Hilda's incredulity, that there was no doll. Her father drew her to him, saying:

"There, there, dear, don't cry! Oh, Hildegarde, love, don't cry! I can't—" His face was very white, and he looked near to tears himself.

"No, papa—no, papa," she whispered, —"no, papa, I won't cry;" then crept away like a timid, gentle, self-respecting child, to have her agony alone. And hidden in her own private nook, in an unused room up-stairs, the spare little body was shaken by paroxysms of sobs, until there finally fell upon her the kind sleep of exhaustion. The affairs of the house went on; supper was served and passed, the father inquiring anxiously of the child's whereabouts, and being diplomatically diverted by Uncle Hank.

Hilda suddenly opened her eyes upon the darkness. It was night. She was lying dressed upon the lounge in the sitting-room; somebody had taken off her shoes and tucked some covering over her. She had the strange feeling which people have when they go to sleep irregularly, at some unusual time and place, not dressed for bed.

For a moment she was dazed and remembered nothing; then her sorrow came rushing back upon her in a flood. But the aftermath of grief was tearless; poor baby! she had wept the fountain dry.

Now, as she lay, inert and spent by a woe quite as real and ravaging as the more sophisticated sorrow of the older soul, she heard a murmur of voices; they were men's voices. Rising, strangely stiff and weary, she crawled to the door and peered silently through. The room into which she looked was the business office of the Three Sorrows; and the scene which met her wondering eyes was a strange one. Into the office had been carried that sewing-machine which the child's mother had purchased and prepared to take with her household supplies to the Texas ranch. Sitting before it, and beneath the strong light of the hanging lamp, was old Hank Pear-

sall, in full cow-puncher regalia, just as he had come in off the range that evening. The broad brim of his sombrero was swept directly up off his face, to be out of the way; the grizzled curls lay on the collar of his rough blue flannel shirt; and his trousers were tucked into the tops of cowboy boots, whose high heels clicked upon the treadles, armed with long-shanked spurs. His sinewy brown hands were twisting a thread to induce it to go through the eye of the needle. Bending anxiously over him was her father, and about the feet of both a tremendous litter of articles very foreign to that environment.

There were yards of white muslin and sheets of newspaper, cut into singular shapes; on the floor a bed-comforter—the pink silk one off the big front-room bed—rent open and with its snowy cotton bulging out; beside it an Angora goatskin with exceptionally long fleece. As the child crouched silently at the door, the men were talking in low, guarded tones. Her father spoke first:

"Can you make it, Hank? I don't know what I did that was wrong, but it ran crooked and puckered, even before it broke the thread."

"Uh-huh!" returned the old man,

genially. "She's liable to buck a little at fust; but ef ye don't spur her in the shoulder nor fight her in the face, she'll soon travel your gait. See?" For the machine had settled down to a steady purr. "Gimme somepin' to sew—anything, to try it on."

The child saw her father duck his sleek black head to pick up a scrap from the floor. Then she heard his laughing voice:

"Pearsall, I believe those long-shanked spurs of yours are what tamed down this bucking sewing-machine. I didn't have mine on."

"Sho!" whispered the old man, bending to unbuckle. "That beats my time! I plumb forgot them spurs. Don't blame ye a mite for laughin'. That's an old cowpuncher every time. Hit's a wonder I didn't try to ride in here on a cuttin' pony, with my guns on, and what you call a 'lariat' swingin'! Sho!"

He removed the big hat, dropped the jingling spurs into its crown, and laid it back on the desk, then straightened up, a benignant figure, strangely incongruous, subduing his great bulk and strength to this little feminine employment.

While the small, anxious watcher at the door looked, in a maze of astonishment, almost doubting if she were really

awake, Uncle Hank's soft voice spoke again, evidently in continuation of something that had gone before:

"H'm—promises! You promised her the time you went to Amarillo 'at you'd bring her sech a doll as ye could git there. Ye forgot it then. Ye forgot it this time. Ye see, Charley, to her ye're jest the feller that promises to bring dolls—and forgits."

Poor Charley Van Brunt! This accusation struck home to his remorseful heart much harder than the kindly speaker had meant it should. He had been all his life promising to bring his friends dolls—and forgetting. Dolls of repentance, of reformation and amendment, clad in shining garments of achievement, he promised; but the valise came ever home empty.

He spoke now: "If we fail, out and out, at this doll-factory business, you—of course she won't believe me, Hank; you're right about that—but *you* tell her, you promise her that—"

"Ain't gwine to promise her nothin', Charley. Ef you leave it to me, w'y, I say either dance up with the doll for her birthday, or don't insult the pore baby with any more promises—"

"Her birthday!" It was her father's

voice that spoke, and in it there was a note of blank amaze. "Well, Pearsall! Do you know I'd forgotten absolutely that it was the child's birthday?"

Uncle Hank's blue eyes glanced up for an instant at the young father, with a look that was incomprehensible to the child.

Van Brunt, however, did not catch this glance; his attention was given elsewhere. And now he spoke in a depressed voice: "Well, this thing isn't going to do—not near. We'll have to make a long improvement over this;" and he picked up an atomy—a thing in human form—of a livid blue-white, like a leper, and of ghastly outline, warped where the ill-guided machine had wavered. The being had a small, narrow, conical head, a neck like a pipe-stem, and limbs long, attenuated, and lumpy where they had been stuffed hard with cotton rammed home by the help of penhandles, in an attempt to round out the starved proportions.

The child looked at this spectre in dismay. Truly, it did fall short of grace —even of decent seemliness. She was glad her father thought so. She did not want them to give her that creature, whose looks she could not help loathing,

however good their intentions might be. She felt sure that she could never produce a grateful countenance, or bring forth any satisfactory thanks, for such a travesty of dollhood as that.

But there seemed to be no danger of such an exigency.

"She'll have a doll for her birthday," repeated old Hank.

"I don't know," deprecated her father. "You see, Hank, we haven't any of the things—"

"*Haven't* we? W'y, Charley, here's a sewin'-machine, an' cotton, an' domestic, an' all the needcessary materials. As for a pattern, w'y, you've got me to go by, an' I've got you, in sech matters as the mere number an' placin' on of arms an' legs an' sech."

He glanced at the object in young Van Brunt's hands. "I reckon ye went mostly by me—in the—the—geography o' that critter. Gosh! Charley, hit's a plumb straddle-bug, an' whopper-jawed at that! Now—here—I have went more by you." (The sentences came out in sections and irregular fragments, through many pins and needles and other small implements which Hank held in his mouth.) "We've got to cut 'em tol'able fat, or they stuff too slim; I see that.

This"—he chuckled softly—"this is a purty fa'r Van Brunt, if that'n is a Pearsall—an' a Pearsall I don't want to acknowledge. She's ready for clo'es now."

"I'll bring some of my things," Van Brunt suggested.

Hank looked dubious. "Hit's lady fixin's, flubdubs, we want. I don't s'pose a man's riggin's would—"

"A man's riggin's!" echoed Van Brunt, laughingly. "You just wait a minute!" and he was gone.

The child hung miserably watching; her already overburdened heart sank at the thought of the morrow. That she should fail to offer some sort of gratitude for these well-meant efforts on her behalf never occurred to her. That awful gulf which yawns between the child's point of view and that of the adult gaped black at her feet; yet she was loyally resolved to bridge it, when the time came, with such show of enthusiasm as she could muster.

Uncle Hank pursed up his lips, looked very fiercely at the needle which he held at considerable distance from his face, laid his head aslant, and finally threaded the needle's eye. Then he evidently propped the product which he had styled "a fa'r Van Brunt"—or so much of it

as was completed—against the sliding top of the big desk, and shaking a finger at her, began to sew upon small white objects, glancing occasionally over his spectacles toward the doll, murmuring to her:

"Now ye set thar, Miss—well, what is your blessed name?—Miss Bon Ton—Miss High Stepper—Miss Tip Top—and mind how ye shoot off yer mouth to-morrow. Ye want to be mighty cl'ar on one p'int, and that is that ye came from Fort Worth. Pa was jest savin' a little surprise when he failed to mention ye to Petty to-day. You was right thar in that grip o' his'n all the time; so don't let me hear no remarks about white domestic, nor Charley's paint-box, nor Uncle Hank's 40 thread. Mind what I'm tellin' ye, Miss Tip Top; we don't want a word of and concernin' the spar'-room bed-comforter. Fort Worth's whar you come from—Fort Worth—a-bringin' the latest fashions in young-lady dolls—and Petty's not to be told things."

Such fond and foolish reckoning on her delight in the birthday doll! It was a relief to Hilda when, a moment later, her father came back, his own face that of a delighted child, his hands full of rich spoils. Old Hank put up his glasses,

and together the men examined, commented, planned.

"Look, Pearsall—here are the petticoats and such like," spreading out handkerchiefs of exquisite linen 'cambric. "And these"—unfurling two brocaded white satin mufflers a yard or more square—"these two are exactly alike; there's enough stuff in 'em to make her a frock. And"—he put down several four-in-hand ties—"there are two of these blue ones alike, enough of a kind to make the dolly a sash."

"Yes, that's right, Charley; I'll make her a surcingle of these blue ones—the Fort Worth doll was to have had a blue surcingle."

Suddenly a look of perplexity, almost of consternation, spread over old Hank's face. "Great Scott! Charley. D'ye know that that there doll was a-goin' to have white kid hands and tan shoes on its feet—tan shoes! Now where in all Texas—"

With a whispered "Hold on!" Van Brunt was out of the room once more, and soon back with a pair of handsome heavy tan driving-gloves in one hand, in the other a pair of white ones. Uncle Hank's eyes were fastened upon them with a pleased look; but he hesitated,

glancing at their owner deprecatingly.

"Them's mighty good gloves, Charley, to—"

"I hope to Heaven they are! The Lord grant they are worthy to make good a man's broken promise—a fellow's discredited word."

Uncle Hank did not gainsay this, and the two wrought for a time silently, the small watcher at the door drawing her breath softly lest it betray her presence.

Suddenly the elder man began to speak: "Ye see, Charley, I was a widder's boy—the oldest; an' the mother she used to make doll-babies for the young ones. I have sot up o' nights before now to work this hyer sort o' racket. But mammy an' me we couldn't paint—nair one of us—not a bit. A lead-pencil or pen an' ink; eyes and nose and mouth—laid out mighty flat an' square, I'm bound to say—'twas all the face them dolls of our'n ever got. The ha'r was ginerally ink, too. The best we could do in that line would be some onravelled tow rope. This here Miss High Stepper's face an' ha'r are simply the finest ever."

"Yes, she's all right," agreed Charley, thankfully.

"You bet she is!" repeated the other.

As he spoke the old man moved aside a little, and Hilda caught her breath in a gasp of incredulous rapture. What radiant creature was this Uncle Hank held forth, turning his head to look at it aslant, half questioning, half pleased?

Muslin had furnished the ground tone for its delicate complexion. Charles Van Brunt's color-box and brushes, guided by his clever brain and fingers, had placed thereon not the inane countenance of the store doll, but the laughing, roguish face of a gay soubrette. Heavily black-fringed blue eyes looked out at you with delightful significance. The lips smiled saucily. The long-fleeced Angora goat-pelt had yielded a head of streaming crinkled tresses, which (after an interview with the color-box) showed a lovely gamboge tint. Head and body were fairly proportioned and well-shapen; any slight inaccuracies were more than compensated for by her *beauté du diable.*

"Why, what's the matter with that?" cried the young father, boyishly. "Say, she's a corker, Hank!"

The child's fascinated eyes were dragged resolutely from the beautiful, smiling water-color face. Uncle Hank wished her to know nothing of the doll,

to be surprised; and with a last doting glance which caressed its perfections she moved noiselessly back across the big dark sitting-room, shivering but ecstatic. Oh, how different a creature from the bereaved little soul that had crossed that room, leaden-footed, sore-hearted, but a few moments back! She drew her slim legs up deliciously under the warm covers that seemed to close about her like the very arms of love themselves, and with a deep sigh of perfect peace relaxed her comforted spirit to sleep.

The long hours of darkness wore away thus; Hildegarde lying in a sleep profound and dreamless; in the other room the two men, both so very masculine in their different ways, working the night through at this woman's employment—this childish task of making and dressing a doll-baby. For the most part they wrought at their strange occupation in deep silence. Occasionally upon the stillness one or the other of the big musical bass voices would rumble out some observation or some question; a tiny garment or bit of tentative anatomy would be held up with an inquiring look, regarded with anxious solicitude, and approved or condemned. Once there was a sudden laugh, as abruptly smothered.

So the night passed. The pallor of dawn was upon the open plain without when the enterprise was brought to a triumphant conclusion, both workers pretty well tired out, but happy. All traces of their nocturnal activities were carefully removed.

When, presently, the sun rose out of the straight line of eastern horizon and sent long level rays to inquire in at the windows of Three Sorrows ranch-house, it discovered the Fort Worth doll to be a fact—a thing consummate and unique. And when, some hours later, Hilda wakened—this time on her own bed in her own room, whither she had been carried and undressed in that sound sleep—she found this radiant creature sitting upon a table beside her pillow.

Save for the presence of the doll herself, the child could never have believed but that the vision of last night was a dream. When subsequently Uncle Hank explained to her, with her father's assistance, that the beautiful Fort Worth doll had been a surprise withheld from her the day before because it was to grace her birthday, she accepted the explanation with a look and manner singular even for Hilda. There was a something exultant in her bearing and

in her thought. Uncle Hank was not telling her the truth. It was not so, that father had brought the doll. But her imaginative soul seized instantly upon the spirit of the thing. All statements —and they were voluminous—concerning the importation and handling of Miss High Stepper she understood to be figurative. This was not fact to which she was listening; it was poetry —parable, and she answered in parable of her own.

She kissed them both passionately, and hugged the pretty doll to her with tears and with laughter, dwelling ardently upon each personal beauty and each separate elegance of attire; the arch, lovely eyes, the dainty tan shoes—all from Fort Worth; that is to say, all found and purchased in, and brought to Hilda out of, the Country of Love and Good Faith.

The Seeds of Time

BY GRACE LATHROP COLLIN

NOW that Mary Ann's hand lay in Miss Ophelia's, nothing was of real import. Only the impress of the morning's tribulations remained, and the clasp of the little girl's plump brown fingers upon the slender white ones betokened agitation as well as affection.

In the month of May in the early fifties, Mary Ann Dodd came from the country to visit her town-bred cousins. In the gig her foot-rest was a small black leather trunk, embossed with M. A. D. in brass nail-heads. Within its chintz-lined walls was her wardrobe; and the glory of her wardrobe was dozen upon dozen of pantalets. Pantalets of common yellow nankeen for mornings, pantalets hemstitched for afternoons, but for Sundays pantalets embroidered in deep points. These last, starched to paper-like stiffness and ironed flat, lay compressed and inconspicuous; but applied

with broadside effect upon her small plump person provided, in Mary Ann's estimation, no mean adjunct to her costume. Yet on this the first Sunday morning, when the tribe of Dodd was gathered in the front hall, the twins, her cousins and compeers, appeared in Rob Roy poplins whose hems touched their gaiters. The pantaletted interval was a thing of the past.

"I suppose in the country the news hasn't reached you," said a twin. "Yes, pantalets are going out. Mother won't let us change our skirts for school yet—only for best. But I wouldn't mind if I was you. Everybody will know you're from the country and will understand."

Beneath the brown-striped barege Mary Ann's bosom swelled stormily. Holding speech with none, she retreated from landing to landing up the stairs. And when in the soft jangle of the First and Second Congregational Church bells the Dodd corps joined the army of churchgoers, Mary Ann walked pantaletless.

It was the sight of her shadow following her obliquely on garden palings that disconcerted her independent mood. From knee to ankle her fat little legs, distorted to impossible length, crossed and recrossed in winking shadows. Her

face grew pinker than the pink cambric lining of her white netted bonnet. Would the church steps never be reached? Then where was the Dodd pew? Oh dear, 'way up under the pulpit! And would the Dodds never, never decide upon the alternate distribution of responsible and irresponsible children and file in to their places? Standing in the church aisle, the little girl's cup of abashment was so full that it was about to overflow in tears, when a silver-gray gloved hand was laid upon her shoulder, a face with a pearly radiance beamed upon her, and she was led into the pew behind the Dodds.

"Thank you so much, Ophelia," Mrs. Dodd said, proffering a peppermint to the youngest Dodd.

The long green rep cushion stretched unoccupied to the pew's end, where sat a fine, erect old gentleman, who did not alter the pose of his head. Mary Ann was instructed in the decorum that ordained her place to be equidistant on this expanse, and prepared to obey. But the lovely lady kept Mary Ann's hand, and as they sat down, the dove silk skirt, gathered in at the pointed bodice, flowed out, submerging Mary Ann's brown frock in its shining folds.

With the hand-clasp as token of favor, the ordeal of meeting the other little girls in Miss Ophelia's Sunday-school class was endurable. For they were all united in the tender romance of little girlhood—the admiration for that delicate ensample of young ladyhood which Miss Ophelia presented. They shared a pride in the ethereal perfection of her costume, which in the far-distant grown-up future, they promised themselves, they would imitate, regardless of fleeting fashions. A phrase, a tone, a gesture, was dipped in perfection if used by her. An affectation—particularly the smile with eyelashes interlaced—became a pattern. Many were the round faces that tried to catch the expression that lent the final touch of appeal to the long, pale oval of Ophelia Oakley's face.

In the Sunday-school programme each recurring May brought a recurring study of the Book of Jonah. "They that observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercy" fell to Mary Ann in the assignment of verses about the class. Mary Ann's æsthetic admiration for one whose gown fell in so gracious an amplitude deepened into reverence for one whose considerateness apportioned a statement so brief yet so significant. Miss Ophelia

meanwhile felt among her gown's mysterious folds and drew from her pocket a small ivory image. With ohs and ahs the little girls gathered round. "These were the idols bowed down to by the people to whom Jonah was sent," said she. "My uncle brought it home from China. He thought it only amusing. But it always distressed my mother. My father keeps it in his desk drawer." Miss Ophelia's goodness, as she sat before them with opened Bible in shimmering silken lap and sardonic image in slender palm, was of another order from the goodness of their mothers in tending the little girls in measles and whooping-cough. It was a quality peculiar to her young ladyhood—a virtue in combination with the mother-of-pearl tints of her temples.

At dismissal, Mary Ann felt a reassuring touch upon her hand. "The little newcomer must see my garden," Miss Ophelia said. While the Dodd twins walked before with tilted heads and swaying skirts, Mary Ann was ushered in at a white gate that swung on a ball and chain and clicked behind them. The garden had little yet to show but springtime greenery, the red leaf-buds of rose-bushes, and a fragile array of narcissus.

The white shell-bordered beds, circles and crescents, lay in mounds of fresh-turned soil. In mute gratitude, Mary Ann recognized the garden as a pretext. Once the churchly procession had passed, she would scamper unobserved back to the Dodd house, and up the stairs to her room and the blessed contents of her trunk. The lovely lady was as good as she was beautiful.

"The lily-of-the-valley bed is my pride," said Miss Ophelia, and encompassed by the swaying silk folds, the child accompanied her across the sunny yard to the L standing in shadow. The L had a door of its own, and a window on each side. It was a smaller edition of the house, white-walled and green-blinded. There was no sign to the effect that it was Judge Oakley's law-office, but even recently arrived little Mary Ann felt that he would know little who knew not that. Close to the white-painted brick foundation, and marked off as if by the oblong of shade cast by the L, lay the lily-of-the-valley bed.

The gate clicked again, and Mary Ann, shrinking into the amplitude of Miss Ophelia's skirt, watched a man cross the garden. To her mind there was a gallantry in his striding up the path and

leaping the crescent-shaped bed. There was a courtliness in the flash of the ring on his finger as he brought his hat in semicircle to his knee. Such an attendant was the appendage that completed Miss Ophelia as a paragon.

The child's brown face, in its pink and white fluted border, was upturned to the conversation that was carried on above her head. To her the words had little significance. But the tones of the two voices preserved her ideal of romantic intercourse. He was schooled to wait for Miss Ophelia's replies, and then was given but a word or two. Sometimes the masculine voice, after many inflections, paused to receive in return only a few notes of Miss Ophelia's laugh. In answer to one speech of his, she handed him the ivory image, and he, tucking his shining hat under his arm, turned the little object about in his fingers, smiling the while.

"So you keep him under lock and key in the dark," he said. "That's what happens in this town to outlandish fellows, even if in their native land they think they are gods. Ah, well, Miss Oakley, in our hearts we know we're only poor mortals, unworthy of a touch of your hand, a glance of your eye. But don't think

too hardly of us when we are absent and cannot defend ourselves. I could not go without bidding you good-by. Yes—

> "'My boat is on the shore
> And my bark is on the sea.'"

"Your boat?"

"Well, not literally. I travel by stage. But Byron gives the spirit."

"Byron?"

"Ah, he'd be kept in the desk drawer too, I fear." Then, after a pause, "Will you give me a flower—a lily?"

She stooped in the wide circle of her skirts and broke a stem of white bells in its green sheath. She held it out to him with downcast eyes. As he took it from her hand, he kissed her full upon the lips.

"Oh!" cried Miss Ophelia, shrinking back against Mary Ann. "Oh!"

Mary Ann looked on, interested but unconcerned. He had given her a kiss in return for the flower. She, Mary Ann, would do the same.

"I did not mean to frighten you," he said. "Wait. Next spring when the lilies-of-the-valley come, I will not forget."

He strode across the garden and, bareheaded, held the gate wide for the Judge, who entered, barely acknowledging the

salute. In church the Judge had not even looked at Mary Ann. He must be jealous, thought the little girl, of all Miss Ophelia's admirers.

The very air, on a morning in the succeeding May, was pinched and blue. The garden-plots looked denuded instead of unapparelled. The thorny branches of the rose-bushes rasped against each other. A covering, even of snow, would have seemed welcome. Miss Ophelia, her shoulders muffled in a white shawl, and with fingers too chill for dexterity, was tending the lily-of-the-valley bed.

In that austere atmosphere the jingle of sleigh-bells from up the street sounded plausible enough. But Miss Ophelia knew that the sound signified the approach of the dealer in spices, who each year made the tour of the local towns. "We are supplied," she called over her shoulder as the jingle dropped into an occasional clang before the Oakley gate. Surprised, she heard the click of the latch, and rose to see the "spice man" holding out a box to her.

"The stage-driver passed this over to me," said he.

"Why, where does it come from?"

"There wa'n't any message."

She opened the box, a wooden one, with a hasp that swung in a circle. Within was a crowded mat of lilies-of-the-valley.

Judge Oakley came to his office window. "What have you there, Ophelia?" he questioned, judicially.

"Lilies-of-the-valley, father."

"Coals to Newcastle, I should say. Who sends 'em?"

Her fingers penetrated every interstice of the flower stems. "There's no name, father."

"You've dropped your shawl."

"Oh, I don't need it." She caught it up by a corner, and with the box clasped close, crossed the garden. At the gate Mrs. Dodd, summoned by the bells, was parleying with the spice man.

"Good morning, Ophelia," she turned to say. "How well you are looking!"

"It's such a lovely day."

"I don't know when I've seen you with so much color."

"I've been working in the garden. By the way," she continued, evasively, as Mrs. Dodd's eyes sought out the contents of the box, "when next you write to your little niece Mary Ann, won't you send her my love? I've meant to write the child myself, but, to tell the truth,

it has quite slipped my mind. How wrong of me—to forget!"

With the fringe of the white shawl dragging behind her, Ophelia ran up the gravel path to the door. "He has not forgotten," she whispered, ecstatically, to the cool silence of the house.

"May I share your pew?"

The frail, black-shawled woman, crouchingly seated by the pew door, looked up with wide, expectant eyes. In the aisle stood another woman, a stranger in the church. There was a distinction in the simplicity of her bearing that would have startled Miss Ophelia into tremulousness were it not for a remembered candor in the brown eyes.

"Why, it's little Mary Ann Dodd!" said she, as she made room for her guest.

"Do you know it's fifty years since I sat here?" asked Mary Ann.

Miss Ophelia smiled with drooped eyelids, and in reply handed her an opened hymnal.

After the service the two women walked along the street together. At the Oakley gate Mary Ann stooped over. Yes, the ball and chain, although eaten with rust, were still there.

"My little maid goes home to her parents over the Sabbath," said Miss Ophelia, fumbling in the depths of her black silk pocket. She drew out a heavy, smooth brass key that reached almost from finger-tips to wrist.

"You live alone?"

"Quite alone."

"That key looks too heavy for your hand. It reminds me in some way of the little idol that you brought to teach us by. I connect Jonah and Chinese idols to this day."

Miss Ophelia with both hands was fitting the key in the lock. Mary Ann turned and looked about her. The green blinds had faded to a blue, the white walls had taken on a granite gray. Miss Ophelia lifted her face, pearly white within the black bonnet brim.

"Won't you come in?"

"I remember the garden so well," Mary Ann replied, oppressed by that locked silence. "Let us stay out here in the sunshine. The L stands unchanged, although the Judge died—is it thirty years ago?"

"Thirty-seven. Won't you rest in the parlor?"

"I can stay only a minute, thank you. My cousins, the Dodds, are expecting

me." She had planned to devote an hour or more to her childhood's admiration; but had not Miss Ophelia already accounted for the incidental gap of fifty years? And to disturb by idle chatter the stillness that had descended upon the Oakley place—a stillness apart from the Sunday hush—seemed desecration. "But I want to show you these photographs." She unfolded a leather case. "I carried it to church in order that I might bring it here. If people noticed it, I hoped they would think it was a Bible. My husband. My three sons. Two are dark like me. Only one, the youngest, is fair like his father."

"The sun shines across the pictures here. Let us go into the shade."

They crossed the garden and stood in the shadow of the L.

"They are lovely countenances," Miss Ophelia said. "You have had a full life, have you not, my dear?"

Mary Ann smiled down upon the upturned face. "Sometimes I think it doesn't matter how full a life is, so long as it isn't empty."

For an instant Miss Ophelia's lashes swept her cheeks with all the reticent coquetry of her young ladyhood. "Mine hasn't been empty, only very quiet."

The quietude of the moment was sufficient acquiescence.

"Wasn't there a lily-of-the-valley bed here?" asked Mary Ann.

"It ran out," Miss Ophelia answered; but the two strayed along the boundary shadow. "I believe the plants died of old age, but I am told that the place was too damp for them." The white brick foundation was spotted with olive moss, and the garden-mould seemed to be creeping upward. Only a few pallid leaves remained in the oblong bed.

"The fragrance of the soil is the same," said Mary Ann. "How scents call up old memories! I have not thought of it for years, but now, standing here, it comes back to me—the way a little girl feels toward a woman who fulfils her vision of all that a 'young lady' should be, and my devotion when I sent you that box of lilies-of-the-valley the first spring after I'd visited my cousins the Dodds."

"You—you sent me the lilies-of-the-valley?"

"Yes, and without any name. I was such a romantic little thing, and I fairly worshipped you. Odd, is it not, the things that one forgets, and the things that one remembers, after fifty years?"

"Oh!" cried Miss Ophelia,—"oh!"

Mary Ann bent over the face that in the shadow seemed to reflect the tint of the house wall. Far less than fifty years had sufficed to erase the childish impression of that other morning, when her Sunday-school teacher had received a kiss as thanks for a flower. But with a quavering echo of her laugh Miss Ophelia turned her face away.

"No," she said, "not on the lips."

The Feel Doll

BY ANNIE HAMILTON DONNELL

THE minister uttered a suppressed note of warning as solid little steps sounded in the hall. It was he who threw a hasty covering over the doll. The minister's wife sewed on undisturbedly. She did worse than that.

"Come here, Rhoda," she called, "and tell me which you like better, three tucks or five in this petticoat?"

"Five,"—promptly, upon inspection. Rhoda pulled away the concealing cover and regarded the stolid doll with tilted head. "She's 'nough like my Pharaoh's Daughter to be a blood-relation," she remarked. "She's got the Pharaoh complexion."

"Spoken like *my* daughter!" laughed the minister. "But I thought new dolls in this house were always surprises. And here's Mrs. Minister making doll petticoats out in the open!"

"This is Rebecca Mary's—I'm dress-

ing a doll for Rebecca Mary, Robert. She's eleven years old and never had a doll! Rhoda's ten and has had— How many dolls have you had, Rhoda?"

"Gracious! Why, Pharaoh's Daughter an' Caiapha, an' Esther the Beautiful Queen, an' the Children of Israel—five o' them,—an' Mrs. Job, an'—"

"Never mind the rest, dear. You hear, Robert? Do you think Rhoda would be alive now if she'd never had a doll?"

The minister pondered the question. "Maybe not, maybe not," he decided; "but possibly the dolls would have been."

"Don't make me smile, Robert. I'm trying to make you cry. If Rebecca Mary were sixty instead of eleven I should dress her a doll."

"Then why not one for Miss Olivia?"

"I may dress her one," undauntedly, "if I find out she never had one in her life."

"She never did." The minister's voice was positive. "And for that reason, dear, aren't you afraid she would not approve of Rebecca Mary's having one? Isn't it rather a delicate mat—"

"Don't, Robert, don't discourage me. It's going to be such a beautiful doll! And you needn't tell me that poor little

eleven-year-old woman-child won't hold out her empty arms for it. Robert, you're a minister—would it be wrong to give it to her *straight?*"

"Straight, dear?"

"Yes; without saying anything to her aunt Olivia. Tell me. Rhoda's gone. Say it as—as liberally as you can."

The minister for answer swept doll, petticoat, and minister's wife into his arms, and kissed them all impartially.

"Think if it were Rhoda," she pleaded.

"And you were 'Aunt Olivia'? You ask me to think such hard things, dear! If I could stop being a minister long enough—"

"Stop!" she laughed; but she knew she meant keep on. With a sigh she burrowed a little deeper in his neck. "Then I'll ask Aunt Olivia first," she said.

She went back to her tucking. Only once more did she mention Rebecca Mary. The once was after she had come downstairs from tucking the children into bed. She stood in the doorway with the look in her face that mothers have after doing things like that. The minister loved that look.

"Robert, nights when I kiss the children—you knew when you married me that I was foolish—I kiss little lone Re-

becca Mary too. I began the day Thomas Jefferson died—I went to the Rebecca-Mary-est window and threw her a kiss. I went to-night. Don't say a word; you knew when you married me."

Aunt Olivia received the resplendent doll in silence. Plummer honesty and Plummer politeness were at variance. Plummer politeness said: "Thank her. For goodness' sake, aren't you going to thank the minister's wife?" But Plummer honesty, grim and yieldless, said, "You can't thank her, because you're not thankful." So Aunt Olivia sat silent, with her resplendent doll across her knees.

"For Rebecca Mary," the minister's wife was saying in rather a halting way. "I dressed it for her. I thought perhaps she never—"

"She never," said Aunt Olivia, briefly. Strange that at that particular instant she should remember a trifling incident in the child's far-off childhood. The incident had to do with a little white nightgown rolled tightly and pinned together. She had found Rebecca Mary cuddling it in bed.

"It's a dollie. Please *'sh*, Aunt Olivia, or you'll wake her up!" the child had whispered in an agony. "Oh, you're not a-going to turn her back to a nightgown?

Don't unpin her, Aunt Olivia—it will kill her! I'll name her after you if you'll let her stay."

"Get up and take your clothes off." Strange Aunt Olivia should remember at this particular instant; should remember, too, that the pin had been a little rusty and came out hard. Rebecca Mary had slid out of bed obediently, but there had been a look on her little brown face as of one bereaved. She had watched the pin come out and the nightgown unroll, in stricken silence. When it hung released and limp over Aunt Olivia's arm she had given one little cry:

"She's dead!"

The minister's wife was talking hurriedly. Her voice seemed a good way off; it had the effect of coming nearer and growing louder as Aunt Olivia stepped back across the years.

"Of course you are to do as you think best about giving it to her," the minister's wife said, unwillingly. This came of being a minister's wife! "But I think —I have always thought—that little girls ought—I mean Rhoda ought—to have dolls to cuddle. It seems part of their —her—inheritance." This was hard work! If Miss Olivia would not sit there looking like that—

"As if I'd done something unkind!" thought the gentle little mother, indignantly. She got up presently and went away. But Aunt Olivia, with the doll hanging unhealthily over her arm, followed her to the door. There was something the Plummer honesty insisted upon Aunt Olivia's saying. She said it reluctantly:

"I think I ought to tell you that I've never believed in dolls. I've always thought they were a waste of time and kept children from learning to do useful things. I've brought Rebecca Mary up according to my best light."

"Worst darkness!" thought the minister's wife, hotly.

"She's never had a doll. I never had one. I got along. I could make butter when I was seven. So perhaps you'd better take the doll—"

"No, no! Please keep it, Miss Olivia, and if you should ever change your mind —I mean perhaps some time— Good-by. It's a beautiful day, isn't it?"

Aunt Olivia took it up into the guest-chamber and laid it in an empty bureau drawer. She closed the drawer hastily. She did not feel as duty-proof as she had once felt, before things had happened —softening things that had pulled at

her heart-strings and weakened her. The quilt on the guest-chamber bed was one of the things; she would not look at it now. And the sheets under the quilt,—and the grave of Thomas Jefferson that she could see from the guest-chamber window. Aunt Olivia was terribly beset with the temptation to take the doll out to Rebecca Mary in the garden.

"Are you going to do it?" demanded Duty, confronting her. "Are you going to give up all your convictions now? Rebecca Mary's in her twelfth year—pretty late to begin to humor her. I thought you didn't believe in humoring."

"I unpinned the nightgown. I never let her make another one."

"But you're weakening now. You want to let her have *this* doll."

"It seems like part of—of her inheritance."

"Lock that drawer!"

Aunt Olivia turned the key unhappily. It was not that her "convictions" had changed—it was her heart.

She went up at odd times and looked at the doll the minister's wife had dressed. She had an unaccountable, uncomfortable feeling that it was lying there in its coffin — that Rebecca Mary would have said, "She's dead."

It was a handsome doll. Aunt Olivia was not acquainted with dolls, but she acknowledged that. She admired it unwillingly. She liked its clothes—the minister's wife had not spared any pains.

Once Aunt Olivia took it out and turned it over in her hands with critical intent, but there was nothing to criticise. It was a beautiful doll. She held it with a curious, shy tenderness. But that time she did not sit down with it. It was the next time.

The rocker was so near the bureau, and Aunt Olivia was tired—and the doll was already in her arms. She only sat down. For a minute she sat quite straight and unrelaxed, then she settled back a little—a little more. The doll lay heavily against her, its flaxen head touching her breast. After the manner of high-bred dolls its eyes drooped sleepily.

Aunt Olivia began to rock—a gentle sway back and forth. She was sixty, but this was the first time she had ever rocked a chi—a doll. So she rocked for a little, scarcely knowing it. When she found out, a wave of soft pink dyed her face and flowed upward redly to her hair.

"Well!" Duty jibed, mocking her.

"Don't say a word!" cried poor Aunt Olivia. "I'll put her right back."

"What good will that do?"

"I'll lock her in."

"You've locked her in before."

"I'll—I'll hide the key."

"Where you can find it! Think again."

Aunt Olivia thrust the doll back into its coffin with unsteady hands. The red in her face had faded to a faint abiding pink. She locked the drawer and drew out the key. She strode to the window and flung it out with a wide sweep of her arm.

The minister's wife, ignorant of the result of her kind little experiment, resolved to question Rebecca Mary the next time she came on an errand. She would do it with extreme caution.

"I'll just feel round," she said. "I want to know if her aunt's given it to her. You think she must have, don't you, Robert? By this time— Why, it was six weeks ago I carried it over! It was such a nice, friendly little doll! By this time they would be such friends—if her aunt gave it to her. Robert, you think—"

"I think it's going to rain," the minister said. But he kissed her to make it easier.

Rebecca Mary came over to bring Aunt Olivia's rule for parson-cake that the minister's wife had asked for.

"Come in, Rebecca Mary," the minister's wife said, cordially. "Don't you want to see the new dress Rhoda's doll is going to have? I suppose you could make your doll's dress yourself?" It seemed a hard thing to say. Feeling round was not pleasant.

"P'haps I could, but she doesn't wear dresses," Rebecca Mary answered, gravely.

"No?" This was puzzling. "Her clothes don't come off, I suppose?" Then it could not be the nice, friendly doll.

"No'm. Nor they don't go on, either. She isn't a feel doll."

"A—what kind did you say, dear?" The minister's wife paused in her work interestedly. Distinctly, Miss Olivia had not given her *the* doll; but this doll—"I don't think I quite understood, Rebecca Mary."

"No'm; it's a little hard. She isn't a *feel* doll, I said. I never had a feel one. Mine hasn't any body, just a soul. But she's a great comfort."

"Robert," appealed the minister's wife, helplessly. This was a case for the minister—a case of souls.

"Tell us some more about her, Rebecca Mary," the minister urged, gently. But there was helplessness, too, in his eyes.

"Why, that's all!" returned Rebecca

Mary, in surprise. "Of course I can't dress her and undress her or take her out calling. But it's a great comfort to rock her soul to sleep."

"Call Rhoda," murmured the minister's wife to the minister; but Rhoda was already there. She volunteered prompt explanation. There was no hesitation in Rhoda's face.

"She means a make-believe doll. Don't you, Rebecca Mary?"

"Yes," Rebecca Mary assented; "that's her other name, I suppose, but I never called her by it."

"What did you call her?" demanded practical Rhoda. "What's her name, I mean?"

"Rhoda!"—hastily, from the minister's wife. This seemed like sacrilege. But Rhoda's clear blue eyes were fixed upon Rebecca Mary; she had not heard her mother's warning little word.

A shy color spread thinly over the lean little face of Rebecca Mary. For the space of a breath or two she hesitated.

"Her name's—Felicia," then, softly.

"Robert"—the children had gone out together; the minister's wife's eyes were unashamedly wet—"Robert, I wish you were a—a sheriff instead of a minister. Because I think I would make a better

sheriff's wife. Do you know what I would make you do?"

The minister could guess.

"I'd make you *arrest* that woman, Robert!"

"Felicia!" but she saw willingness for her to be a sheriff's wife come into his own eyes and stop there briefly.

"Don't call me 'Felicia' while I feel as wicked as this! Oh, Robert, to think she named her little soul-doll after me!"

"It's a beautiful name."

Suddenly the wickedness was over. She laughed unsteadily.

"It wouldn't be a good name for a sheriff's wife, would it?" she said. "So I'll stay by my own minister."

One day close upon this time Aunt Olivia came abruptly upon Rebecca Mary in the grape-arbor. She was sitting in her little rocking-chair, swaying back and forth slowly. She did not see Aunt Olivia. What was this she was crooning half under her breath?

"Oh, hush, oh, hush, my dollie;
Don't worry any more,
For Rebecca Mary 'n' the angels
Are watching o'er,
—O'er 'n' o'er 'n' o'er."

The same words over and over—grow-

ing perhaps a little softer and tenderer. Rebecca Mary's arm was crooked as though a little flaxen head lay in the bend of it. Rebecca Mary's brooding little face was gazing downward intently at her empty arm. Quite suddenly it came upon Aunt Olivia that she had seen the child rocking like this before—that she must have seen her often.

"Rebecca Mary 'n' the angels
Are watching o'er,"

sang on the crooning little voice in Aunt Olivia's ears.

The doll in its coffin up-stairs; down here Rebecca Mary rocking her empty arms. The two thoughts flashed into Aunt Olivia's mind and welded into one. All her vacillations and Duty's sharp reminders occurred to her clearly. She had thought that at last she was proof against temptation, but she had not thought of this. She was not prepared for Rebecca Mary, here in her rocking-chair, rocking her little soul-doll to sleep.

The angels were used to watching o'er, but Aunt Olivia could not bear it. She turned away with a strange, unaccustomed ache in her throat. The minister's wife would not have wanted her arrested then.

Aunt Olivia tiptoed away as though Rebecca Mary had said, "'Sh!" She was remembering, as she went, the brief, sweet moment when she had sat like that and rocked, with the doll the minister's wife had dressed in her arms. It seemed to establish a new link of kinship between her and Rebecca Mary.

She ran plump into Duty.

"Oh!" she gasped. She was a little stunned. Aunt Olivia's Duty was robust and solid.

"I know where you've been. I tried to get there in time."

"You're too late," Aunt Olivia said, firmly. "Don't stop me; there's something I must do before it gets too dark. It's six o'clock now."

"Wait!" commanded Duty. "Are you crazy? You don't mean—"

"Go back there and look at that child — and hear what she's singing! Stay long enough to take it all in— don't hurry."

But Duty barred her way, grim and stern. Palely she put up both her hands and thrust it aside. She did not once look back at it.

Already it was dusky under the guest-chamber window. She had to stoop and

peer and feel in the long tangle of grass. She kept on patiently with the Plummer kind of patience that never gave up. She was eager and smiling, as though something pleasant were at the end of the peering and stooping and feeling.

Aunt Olivia was hunting for a key.

The Wind of Dreams

BY ROY ROLFE GILSON

CLOSE to the library window you held your book, that its last enchanted pages might catch the twilight. The print was fine. The words you could just descry as they flowed sweetly with a sound as of plashing burns, and Highland winds, and a scent as of purple heather. As the light of day waned dimmer, the flame of romance flared higher in those Scottish pages, so that you held them nearer to your straining eyes. "The End," you read, and closed them with a sigh.

In a strange unrest you rose from the window-seat. Upon it you left the book —husk of the idyl you bore away. The house was stifling. You seized your cap and strode out into the chill November air.

The wind was blowing. The sun was setting in a wild glory. Between the swart earth and the rain-clouds hanging in the western sky was a strip as of gold-

en sea. On its molten bosom black cloud-islands drifted in the rising gale. Its farther shore, jagged and mountainous, crowned the saffron with a crimson glow. Suddenly, beyond, through parting clouds, appeared a greater sea, growing with the wind—a sea of palest green, luminous, silvery as though in moonshine. Over this arras of departing day the orchards hung a lace of gaunt, black boughs, trembling with every moaning gust. You shivered deliciously. It was like a sunset in that Scottish love-story.

You buttoned your coat more tightly about your throat, sighed, strode away in an ecstasy of youth, your steps in time to the rhythm of your fancies. Against the bleak November sky a distant mill took on the shape of a battlemented tower. Lights twinkled below the hill — twinkled as brightly in the deepening night as though they were not in Ourtown, but in some village of stone and ivy and romance, where still were shepherds and milkmaids, legends and fairy-tales. If it were only true! The flocks now would be safely folded. The shepherds would be burring over their steaming porridge:

"A wild nicht in the glen, Tammas."

"Ou, aye."

And Ourtown looked Scottish and beautiful in the dark o' night, when you could see naught of it but its lights and shadows, and hear naught of it but the wind singing in the maples as though it were singing in a glen.

A land of winds and water was that bonny Scotland. Aye, the books had told you — those Scottish romances devoured in the window-seat. The winds swept swirling clouds about the crags, spread purple mists across the lochs and moors and heather, and sighed and sang in the glens. The sea foamed wildly on the rocks and the yellow sands. A bonny land to write about; small wonder, then, that its sons wrote lovingly. Where was such witchery in Ourtown, painted and wooden, and its mild countryside with its sand and its sluggish streams? At the thought you strode bitterly through the wind and night. No, not a single crag o'ertopped Ourtown. Not a single torrent raced, gurgling and splashing, over rocks and shallows like those Scottish burns. The Ourtown brooks flowed listlessly without a stone to sing upon. There were no sheep-bells tinkling among the hills.

Poor, poor young bard! Oh yes, there was a poet in you — the books had

told you more than they bargained for —a poet born out of place and time! You felt the gnawing at your vitals. You felt the flame in your heart. Poetic fire might burn on hearthstone side by side with a blazing log or peat, you told yourself, but, oh, thou modern Ourtown! how should it blaze in thy black gas-ranges and thy patent furnace-pipes — in thy heat without glowing, thy comfort without beauty, thy modern thoughts without dreaming, thy modern words without legend, without song?

Alone you stood in the darkness, scowling at Ourtown's electric lights. You shook your fist at them. You ground your teeth.

"Plate-glass windows!" you spluttered, smashing them gleefully in your mind and thinking of Abbey drawings, of fair little villages with diamond panes.

"Shingles and tin!" — thinking of thatched roofs, golden with newness or gray with age in the straggling byways of some ancient town.

"And not a single inn!" you groaned, thinking of good old stage-coach days, with the fire roaring up the broad chimney on a winter's night, and the high oak settles creaking under rotund figures puffing church-wardens and sipping good

mulled ale, and smiling and chuckling in the glow. You saw brass kettles shining on the walls, and the pewter tankards, and on the polished sideboard roast of beef, saddle of mutton, and haunch of the wild red deer. . . .

"Bah!" you shouted at Ourtown, and "Bah!" again at its Palace Hotel and its lunch-counters—oh, ye gods of poetry! — its meagre lunch-counters with their high stools and their rows of sodden pies, and their crullers in pyramids under glass, like the wax flowers of our grandmothers'!

Romance in Ourtown?

Poetry in Ourtown?

Bah!

You turned away. The wind had risen, cooling your scowling brow . . . moaning in the fir-trees of your Highland glen. It clapped you smartly on the cheek. You turned the other. You drew the plaid more closely about your mind as it trod the heather. A splash of rain blinded your eyes. You dashed it away and smiled to yourself in the gloaming. Ah, how the salt spray tingled! How the waves hissed and thundered in the mists o' Skye! . . .

So when the wind blew brawly it was

Scottish weather. The autumn became the Scottish season of the year. The harder the wind blew, the louder its song in the tree-tops, the faster the gray clouds scurried across the sky, the harder you tramped the countryside, the more Scottish were your dreams. Your Scottish shoulders were broad and thick, you carried your Scottish chin jauntily, and the muscles of your Scottish legs—aye, mon, but they were bonny!

Ending a tramp, perhaps, you lagged, listless, when suddenly a wind sprang up, and, nodding in its breath, a purple thistle hung aboon your path! It was a sign to you. Your Scottish eyes brightened. Your Scottish nostrils trembled as at a sniff of heather in a Highland breeze. And then—ah, masterful Scottish legs of yours!—how they bristled with might again, how you marched proudly with swinging strides and the colors flying in your cheeks. . . . You had seen the watch-fires flaming on the hills. You had heard the war-pipes skirling in the glen. . . .

The wind grew wilder. It flung the Scottish clouds athwart the sky. It sent the white dust whirling. You shouted for very glee of its Scottish bluster; you sang for very joy of its Scottish dream—

"March! March! Tweeddale and Teviotdale,"

—and so the bluebonnets got over the Border, a flurry of plaids in a Scottish gale.

Aye, you wore a tam-o'-shanter now, braving the vulgar little Ourtown boys who jeered at it, pointing it out to you with dirty fingers as though you did not know full well that it was there. You wore a plaid cravat. On the edge of your Virgil you drew claymores and thistles and lions rampant on little shields.

Out of the schoolroom window your eyes wandered from your Latin. Darkly they rested on Ourtown, painted and wooden and glaring in the sun. The smoke of its factory chimneys rose busily into the autumn air. The din of its sawmills came wailing up to you, and you frowned at the sound. It was not logs they were cutting there. It was green trees and cool shadows and the songs of birds and wind in branches. Romance they were cutting there—you could hear it moaning in the saw's cruel teeth. Romance and poetry they were slicing into yellow strips to be piled and measured and sold for gold!

A Highland breeze stole freshly through the schoolroom window. It sang of oth-

er days when the red deer and the mailed knight and the cowled friar drank from the same cool woodland spring. Had romance fled with those good old times, you wondered? Your Highland breeze murmured a half-dissent. "Not quite," it told you. "You may still rove where the red deer ran; you may still drink where the knights and friars quenched their thirst in the greenwood shade. Romance lingers in castle towers and ivied walls. . . ."

Then why not go there?

Yes, you would go to Scotland. . . . (It looked cold there on the map.) Well —at the first warm tavern you would stop. You would barely notice the black-eyed one drawing the ale, lest she should know herself for the first barmaid you had ever seen. Oh, you would be canny that day. You would lean idly against the bar, giving the smoke-stained room a careless glance or so. You would yawn dreamily, and yawn again, lost, no doubt, in your own thoughts, while the barmaid served you. You would not chuck her under the chin. Oh no—you had read too far for that. Only a lord may have such freedom—a young scamp of a lord in riding-breeches, while the grinning hostler holds his horse before the

door. No, you would be very gentlemanly to the black-eyed one. "Thank you," you would say, and "Good-morning," and go your way. . . . But if she were pretty! . . . Well, then, at the top of the street you would have a glance back again.

"Ah, the Brown Bull," you would murmur, noting the tavern sign. You would take a pencil and note-book from the pocket of your—tweeds.

"Thrumtochty," you would write. "Very good ale at the Brown Bull. P. B. M."

Initials would be safe. If a man should see them, "Pretty barmaid," you would say, frankly; if a woman, why—"Pretty bad morning."

That night you hurried home from school. You flung your tam-o'-shanter on its peg and sought the kitchen.

"Mother, I've made up my mind."

"Again?"

"I'm not going to Harvard."

"Not going to Harvard?"

"No; I'm going to Edinburgh."

"But, my son—"

"I know, mother. I know it's a long way off, and expensive, but I can manage it. I must. I shall never be happy till I do. I'll write to Edinburgh to-night.

Only think, mother, of being in Scotland; of Melrose Abbey by moonlight, and Abbotsford, and all the castles and things! And the Highlands, mother! Oh, I hate Ourtown!"

"Hate Ourtown?"

"Yes—it's so ugly and so new."

Weel—

You did not go to Edinburgh, or Melrose and its moonlight, or Abbotsford and its shrine. You stayed in Ourtown, painted and wooden though it was—and beautiful. You found your romance in your Scottish winds blowing across the Ourtown marshes and stealing around the placid little cragless hills. Eagerly you bent your ear to them. You heard pibrochs in their skirling, boat-songs in their swaying,—love-songs even in their softer strains.

Do you mind that Scottish day in Indian summer when you lingered in the woods? The mellow sunshine mingling with the leaves gave gold for gold and fell about you and beyond, a magic mist among the gray and purple of the half-clad boughs. With every shift of wind-swept rack in the blue sky the yellow flood ebbed and flowed; left you chilled with gray cloud shadows and western

breeze — keen premonitions of winter gales to come; crept back to you with the emerging sun to warm and cheer you with a glow as of the summer that was gone. Leaves still fettered by aspen twig and stem danced in the wind awhile, as in the sap and green of their lost spring, but every gust was an autumn swan-song, and they fluttered down to meet their shadows on the strewn earth. In the brown bush, piping of startled birds; in the air the autumn fragrance; in your soul an autumn dream.

You hummed a song — of a Highland maid, some blue-eyed Jessie. It's a pretty name — Jessie — you told yourself. . . . "It's a pretty name, Jessie," you would be telling her, minding her blue eyes better than the helm. "See the herring-boats," she would be answering, through the salt spray; . . . or you would be salmon-fishing . . . or at the top of the brae in the heather, little tendrils of her hair straying into her blue eyes and across the rose glow of her cheeks. . . The waves would be lapping the yellow shore. The sun would be sinking slowly into the flaming sea. . . . "You never dreamed of loving a Scottish lassie," she would be saying. . . . "Ah, but I did, Jessie," you would be an-

swering her. "I was only a schoolboy in Ourtown when I first loved you, long ago. . . ."

Foolish, meddlesome Scottish wind! Did the Ourtown maidens lack in loveliness? Julia, for instance, was fair and pink enough as you walked from school with her. No, it was not their faces—but they had no Burns, no Black or Jamie B. to plead for them. You could never find one of them dancing in moonlight in a wood, or singing in a gloaming or a dairy. There were moonshine in Ourtown, and romantic gloamings, but no dairies for girls to sing in. There was a meadow or two where bells tinkled, but never a milkmaid to call the kine.

Yet even an Ourtown lass, at a pinch of course, was not displeasing. Julia, for example; even Julia, considered Scottishly—taken, ye ken, in a r-r-right br-r-raw Highland gale—eh? Man, man, but she was sonsie! How she clung to your strong young Gaelic arm that morn—that autumn, Caledonian morning of your youth—how she hung there laughingly, gasping for breath!

"My, but it is blowy! Have you read . . ."

"What's that?" you cried, turning your ear from the deafening blast.

"*Barrie's—new story.*"

"Yes."

"I read the last of it," she said, in a lull of the wind, "only this morning. Oh, I think Scotland must be beautiful—so wild, so—"

"Yes," you shouted. She nodded and went on:

"I've always . . ."

"Always what?" you cried. "I can't hear you."

"I say I've always *wanted to go there.*"

"Oh!" you said. "So have I."

She looked up questioningly.

"*So have I,*" you bellowed again. Then you both laughed, swallowing mouthfuls of the gale.

"My great-great-grandfather," she confided, in its next interval, "was a Scotchman."

You pricked up your ears at that.

"A Scotchman?"

"Yes—that is, half of him was."

"And the other half?"

"Why, that was . . ."

"What?" you roared. "I didn't catch it."

"I say the other half was . . ."

"Dutch, did you say?"

"*Irish!*"

"Oh—h," you said.

She turned her back upon the hurricane to catch her breath and arrange her flying hair. "Oh dear—this wind!" she panted. "I like it, though. It's so *Scotch,* isn't it?"

You nodded, wondering. Now here was a girl who—

"I suppose," she said, "that's why I like it. My great-great—" She broke off laughingly. "It stirs me . . ."

"What?" you shouted, for the wind had changed again.

"I say, it stirs me all . . ."

"All what?"

"*All up.*"

"Oh yes," you answered. "It's a b-bully wind."

It was. At her gate she paused to say good-by to you, little tendrils of her hair straying into her blue eyes and across the rose glow of her cheeks. It's a pretty name—Julia, you told yourself as you breasted the gale again. "It's a pretty name, Julia," you might be telling her if you would, minding her blue eyes better than . . .

Alas! the weather is not what it used to be.

The Amigo

BY WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

HIS name was really Perez Armando Aldeano, but in the end everybody called him the *amigo,* because that was the endearing term by which he saluted all the world. There was a time when the children called him "Span-yard," in their games, for he spoke no tongue but Spanish, and though he came from Ecuador, and was no more a Spaniard than they were English, he answered to the call of "Span-yard!" whenever he heard it. He came eagerly in the hope of fun, and all the more eagerly if there was a hope of mischief in the fun. Still, to discerning spirits, he was always the *amigo,* for when he hailed you so, you could not help hailing him so again, and whatever mock he put upon you afterwards, you were his secret and inalienable friend.

The moment of my own acceptance in this quality came in the first hours of ex-

pansion following our getting to sea after long detention in the dock by fog. A small figure came flying down the deck with outspread arms, and a joyful cry of "Ah, *amigo!*" as if we were now meeting unexpectedly after a former intimacy in Bogotá; and the *amigo* clasped me round the middle to his bosom, or more strictly speaking, his brow, which he plunged into my waistcoat. He was clad in a long black overcoat, and a boy's knee-pants, and under the peak of his cap twinkled the merriest black eyes that ever lighted up a smiling face of olive hue. Thereafter, he was more and more, with the thinness of his small black legs, and his habit of hopping up and down, and dancing threateningly about, with mischief latent in every motion, like a crow which in being tamed has acquired one of the worst traits of civilization. He began babbling and gurgling in Spanish, and took my hand for a stroll about the ship, and from that time we were, with certain crises of disaffection, firm allies.

There were others whom he hailed and adopted his friends, whose legs he clung about and impeded in their walks, or whom he required to toss him into the air as they passed, but I flattered myself

that he had a peculiar, because a primary, esteem for myself. I have thought it might be that, Bogotá being said to be a very literary capital, as those things go in South America, he was mystically aware of a common ground between us, wider and deeper than that of his other friendships. But it may have been somewhat owing to my inviting him to my cabin to choose such portion as he would of a lady-cake sent us on shipboard at the last hour. He prattled and chuckled over it in the soft gutturals of his parrot-like Spanish, and rushed up on deck to eat the frosting off in the presence of his small companions, and to exult before them in the exploitation of a novel pleasure. Yet it could not have been the lady-cake which lastingly endeared me to him, for by the next day he had learned prudence and refused it without withdrawing his amity.

This, indeed, was always tempered by what seemed a constitutional irony, and he did not impart it to any one without some time making his friend feel the edge of his practical humor. It was not long before the children whom he gathered to his heart had each and all suffered some fall or bump or bruise which, if not of his intention was of his infliction, and

which was regretted with such winning archness that the very mothers of them could not resist him, and his victims dried their tears to follow him with glad cries of "Span-yard, Span-yard!" Injury at his hands was a favor; neglect was the only real grievance. He went about rolling his small black head, and darting roguish lightnings from under his thick-fringed eyes, and making more trouble with a more enticing gayety than all the other people on the ship put together.

The truth must be owned that the time came, long before the end of the voyage, when it was felt that in the interest of the common welfare, something must be done about the *amigo*. At the conversational end of the doctor's table where he was discussed whenever the racks were not on, and the talk might have languished without their inspiration, his badness was debated at every meal. Some declared him the worst boy in the world, and held against his half-hearted defenders that something ought to be done about him; and one was left to imagine all the darker fate for him because there was nothing specific in these convictions. He could not be thrown overboard, and if he had been put in irons probably his worst enemies at the conversational end

of the table would have been the first to intercede for him. It is not certain, however, that their prayers would have been effective with the captain, if that officer, framed for comfort as well as command, could have known how accurately the *amigo* had dramatized his personal presence by throwing himself back, and clasping his hands a foot in front of his small stomach, and making a few tilting paces forward.

The *amigo* had a mimic gift which he liked to exercise when he could find no intelligible language for the expression of his ironic spirit. Being forbidden visits in and out of season to certain staterooms whose inmates feigned a wish to sleep, he represented in what grotesque attitudes of sonorous slumber they passed their day, and he spared neither age nor sex in these graphic shows. When age refused one day to go up on deck with him and pleaded in such Spanish as it could pluck up from its past studies that it was too old, he laughed it to scorn. "You are not old," he said. "Why?" the flattered dotard inquired. "Because you smile," and that seemed reason enough for one's continued youth. It was then that the *amigo* gave his own age, carefully telling the Spanish

numerals over, and explaining further by holding up both hands with one finger shut in. But he had the subtlety of centuries in his nine years, and he penetrated the ship everywhere with his arch spirit of mischief. It was mischief always in the interest of the good-fellowship which he offered impartially to old and young; and if it were mere frolic, with no ulterior object, he did not care at all how old or young his playmate was. This endeared him naturally to every age; and the little blond German-American boy dried his tears from the last accident inflicted on him by the *amigo* to recall him by tender entreaties of "Span-yard, Span-yard!" while the eldest of his friends could not hold out against him more than two days in the strained relations following upon the *amigo's* sweeping him down the back with a toy broom employed by the German-American boy to scrub the scuppers. This was not so much an injury as an indignity, but it was resented as an indignity, in spite of many demure glances of propitiation from the *amigo's* ironical eyes, and murmurs of inarticulate apology as he passed.

He was, up to a certain point, the kindest and truest of *amigos;* then his weird seizure came, and the baby was

spilled out of the carriage he had been so benevolently pushing up and down; or the second officer's legs, as he walked past with the prettiest girl on board, were hit with the stick that the *amigo* had been innocently playing shuffle-board with; or some passenger was taken unawares in his vanity or infirmity, and made to contribute to the *amigo's* passion for active amusement.

At this point I ought to explain that the *amigo* was not travelling alone from Ecuador to Paris, where it was said he was to rejoin his father. At meal-times, and at other rare intervals, he was seen to be in the charge of a very dark and very silent little man, with intensely black eyes and mustache, clad in raven hues from his head to the delicate feet on which he wore patent-leather shoes. With him the *amigo* walked gravely up and down the deck, and behaved decorously at table; and we could not reconcile the apparent affection between the two with a theory we had that the *amigo* had been found impossible in his own country, and had been sent out of Ecuador by a decree of the government, or perhaps a vote of the whole people. The little, dark, silent man, in his patent-leather boots, had not the air of conveying a state

prisoner into exile, and we wondered in vain what the tie between him and the *amigo* was. He might have been his tutor, or his uncle. He exercised a quite mystical control over the *amigo,* who was exactly obedient to him in everything, and would not look aside at you when in his keeping. We reflected with awe and pathos that, as they roomed together, it was his privilege to see the *amigo* asleep, when that little, very kissable black head rested innocently on the pillow, and the busy brain within it was at peace with the world which formed its pleasure and its prey in waking.

It would be idle to represent that the *amigo* played his pranks upon that ship-load of long-suffering people with final impunity. The time came when they not only said something must be done, but actually did something. It was by the hand of one of the *amigo's* sweetest and kindest friends, namely, that elderly captain, off duty, who was going out to be assigned his ship in Hamburg. From the first he had shown the affectionate tenderness for the *amigo* which was felt by all except some obdurate hearts at the conversational end of the table; and it must have been with a loving interest in the *amigo's* ultimate well-being that,

taking him in an ecstasy of mischief, he drew the *amigo* face downwards across his knee, and bestowed the chastisement which was morally a caress.' He dismissed him with a smile in which the *amigo* read the good understanding that existed unimpaired between them, and accepted his correction with the same affection as that which had given it. He shook himself and ran off with an enjoyment of the joke as great as that of any of the spectators, and far more generous.

In fact there was nothing mean in the *amigo*. Impish he was, or might be, but only in the sort of the crow or the parrot; there was no malevolence in his fine malice. One fancied him in his adolescence taking part in one of the frequent revolutions of his continent, but humorously, not homicidally. He would like to alarm the other faction, and perhaps drive it from power, but if he had the say there would be no bringing the vanquished out into the plaza to be shot. He may now have been on his way to France ultimately to study medicine, which seems to be preliminary to a high political career in South America; but in the mean time we feared for him in that republic of severely regulated subordinations.

We thought with pathos of our early parting with him, as we approached Plymouth and tried to be kodaked with him, considering it an honor and pleasure. He so far shared our feeling as to consent, but he insisted on wearing a pair of glasses which had large eyes painted on them, and on being taken in the act of inflating a toy balloon. Probably, therefore, the likeness would not be recognized in Bogotá, but it will always be endeared to us by the memory of the many mockeries suffered from him. There were other friends whom we left on the ship, notably those of the conversational end of the table, who thought him simply a bad boy; but there were none of such peculiar appeal as he, when he stood by the guard, opening and shutting his hand in ironical adieu, and looking smaller and smaller as our tender drifted away, and the vast liner loomed immense before us. He may have contributed to its effect of immensity by the smallness of his presence, or it may have dwarfed him. No matter; he filled no slight space in our lives while he lasted. Now that he is no longer there, was he really a bad little boy, merely and simply? Heaven knows, which alone knows good boys from bad.

Adeline Thurston, Poetess

BY ELIZABETH JORDAN

THIS story is about Adeline Thurston, and how she came into my life and 'most wrecked it. Also about how she was foiled by Mabel Blossom, my noble schoolmate and friend at St. Catharine's. Thank you, Mabel, for what you did, and forgive me if I have not always seemed to appreciate your beautiful nature in these stories. I do now. This one will show it. These lines are a preface. The real story begins on the line below this one:

Adeline Thurston was a new girl at St. Catharine's; but I would not write about her for that reason, as there are a great many new girls every year, and all too few of them, alas! are worthy of the time and attention of a Literary Artist. They are pretty much alike, you know. Usually they are very unhappy and quite haughty for a few days, and they talk a good deal about their homes and the

clothes they have brought with them, and during this time Maudie Joyce and Mabel Blossom and Mabel Muriel Murphy and I stand slightly aloof and study them with our wise young eyes that have probed life so deeply. We four girls are the leaders of the school, and though we are only fourteen, we are so mature and experienced that all the others naturally look up to us and let us decide things for them, as is fitting. Nor is their girlish confidence misplaced. Sister Irmingarde once told a visitor that we are "an exceptionally bright quartet." It came back to us afterwards, because the visitor repeated it to some one, and you can imagine whether we were pleased! Then we knew why that guest had gazed upon us admiringly, and had hung upon our words the way she did when we were introduced to her on the campus.

It is indeed extraordinary how quickly we are discovered by strangers. I suppose it is Maudie Joyce's queenly carriage they notice first. Then they see Mabel Blossom trying to look like St. Cecilia (she always does when visitors come), and next they observe Mabel Muriel Murphy's dignified mien that she learned from Sister Edna. I don't quite know which quality they admire most in

me. Perhaps it is my aloofness from worldly interests, that is growing upon me more and more when new plots for stories come to me. You cannot expect the literary artist, who lives in a dream-world, to be conscious of the small affairs of those around her; so, very often, I don't even see people when I pass them. The other day in the hall I walked right over two minims and upset them, and, my! didn't they yell! But when they found out who had done it they flushed with childish joy and pride, and I could hardly make them get up. They seemed to want to stay right there. They were nice little things, only eight, so I spoke to them very kindly after I stood them on their feet, and I advised them concerning their studies; they are bragging about it yet. How easy it is to make the young happy! Oh, innocent, care-free days of childhood, how oft do I recall ye now in these grim months of intellectual strife, when we seem to be having written examinations all the time! But I must not digress. I am learning not to. I will return to Adeline.

As I said before, when new girls come to St. Catharine's, Maudie and Mabel Blossom and Mabel Muriel and I spend a few days in quiet observation of them

before we decide whether to admit them into our very innermost circle right away, or to leave them for a few months in "outer darkness," as Mabel Blossom calls it. Outer darkness is a kind of probation, and if they are eager and humble they can learn things there that help to fit them for our society. At first they are apt to be quite haughty about it, and say they don't care, and try to act as if they didn't; but in the end they are glad indeed to sit at our feet. And they all listen to my stories, too, and look at us with the awe which is fitting in the presence of the gifted. Most of them seem to admire me more than the others, but of course I know it is for my Art, of which I am but the humble instrument.

Well, we expected that Adeline Thurston would do this too, but from the very first it was different with her, somehow. She was fourteen, and tall for her age, and she had brown hair and very light blue eyes, and they were near-sighted, so she squinted a little, and she didn't dress very well. She wore queer-looking, baggy dresses with girdles around the waist, and she told Maudie Joyce she designed them all herself, and that her mother let her. She said they were individual and artistic. She had her collars cut low at the

neck to show the curves of the throat, she said; but there weren't any curves, and Mabel Blossom said perhaps they had been thoughtlessly left at home. She didn't say this to Adeline, of course; only to us. Adeline didn't seem to mind a bit because we didn't take her into our very innermost circle right away. She kept by herself a great deal, and was very reserved and mysterious, so all the girls began to talk about her. Then I studied her a little myself, for if she had a carking care or a secret sorrow I wanted to discover it and write a story about it. But I couldn't discover anything except that she chewed chalk during the history hour, and wore the same collar three days, and wasn't careful about sewing buttons on her shoes when they fell off, and never had the parting of her hair straight, and had a tooth 'way back that needed to be filled. I was not giving her much of my attention, for I was almost sure a new plot was working in me, and at such times I just sit and wait with bated breath to see what it is going to be. All the girls let me alone then, for fear they will divert my mind from my Art. But the plot didn't come and nothing happened, and I got tired waiting.

So, finally, when Mabel Blossom and Maudie Joyce began to tell me the things that were being said about Adeline Thurston, I turned a lenient ear to their girlish prattle. They said that Adeline spent hours and hours and hours by herself in the different parts of the grounds, dreaming on the river bank or musing under the trees. And they said she was doing some kind of special work, they didn't know what, and that after the Grand Silence had fallen and the convent lay dark and still, Adeline Thurston arose from her snowy bed and did things most of the night. No one knew what the things were, for Adeline wouldn't tell. She only looked mysterious when they asked, and sighed and said perhaps they'd know some day.

I could see that Maudie Joyce was getting excited about it, and terribly interested. You know how romantic she is, and I guess perhaps she thought Adeline was eating out her girlish heart over some hidden grief. She began to be nice to Adeline, and went and sat beside her several times, and walked with her one evening in the grounds; but Adeline took it all as quietly as if Maudie had been one of the minims instead of the queenliest girl in school. Once when Maudie

asked her to take a walk she excused herself and said she had something else to do! Maudie's face looked funny when she told me that, for her proud nature had never before known such a rebuff, but she didn't get angry. She just got more interested than ever and kept right on being nice to Adeline, and was with her so much that Mabel and I hardly saw her for days at a time. I could tell just here how our sensitive natures suffered over it, too, but I won't, for this story is not about us. It is about Adeline, though of course my dear friend Mabel Blossom comes into it a great deal, on account of the deeds she did.

Well, one afternoon Maudie Joyce came to me looking as excited as if she had just been an ordinary girl with no queenly carriage and no control over her emotions. She said she would confide to me a great secret if I would never, never, never tell, and of course I promised. I kept my word, too, as a General's daughter must do, and you'd better believe it wasn't easy, either, with Mabel Blossom asking me what it was and then looking hurt because I wouldn't tell. My sufferings were dreadful. So were Mabel's. Hers were worse, I guess; anyhow, she seemed to think they were. So finally I

got Maudie to tell her, too, and then we all three knew. I will now tell the interested reader, after keeping him in suspense a while, according to the rules of my Art. Sister Irmingarde says I should not explain in my stories *why* I do things —but I really must. I am afraid the reader will not know if I don't. I will now tell the secret, and it will probably make your heart stop beating, just as it did mine. And then maybe you will get a queer kind of a sinking, sick feeling in your stomach. I did.

For Adeline Thurston was a poet! She wrote poems.

That was what she was doing when she sat up nights. And that was why she liked to be alone. She was getting inspiration, Maudie said. And then, while I was trying to take it all in, and not doing it very well, either, Maudie grabbed my arm and began to pull me toward the river. I tried to speak, but she put her finger on her lips, and after we had walked quite a long way she began to move stealthily, like an Indian, and of course I did, too. We were careful not to step on twigs that would crackle, and not to brush the branches of the willows as we passed under them. Finally we came to a kind of an open place and Maudie mo-

tioned to me to stop, and she put her fingers to her lips again and pointed at something, and then I understood why we had come. The sun was sinking into rest, and the river lay bathed in its dying rays. Please read that sentence twice, for I worked hard on it, and I would like to have it appreciated. Something else was bathed in its dying rays, too, and that was what Maudie Joyce was pointing at. It was Adeline Thurston, and she stood with her back to us, and her arms stretched out toward the expiring King of Day. That means the sun. Her head was away back and turned a little, and we could see that her eyes were raised and her mouth was open. Some careless, thoughtless observers might have imagined something was the matter with Adeline, but I knew better. I knew she was having an attack of the artistic temperament, like I do myself, only mine acts different on the outside of me.

For a moment I looked at the beautiful picture, and my heart beat so I thought Maudie would hear it, and my eyes filled with slow, hot tears. Then I glanced at Maudie, and the uplifted look on her pure young face brought on a strange, sinking, sick feeling. Maudie was staring at Adeline as if her eyes would drop out.

She had never looked at me like that—not even when Sister Irmingarde was reading one of my stories aloud to the class. So I knew she admired Adeline's poetry more than she did my stories. I will now describe what was in my heart.

You see, up to this time I had been the only Author at St. Catharine's, and of course it was a great thing for the girls to have one of their classmates a real story-teller. I have tried to keep humble and to remember that I am only the stove in which the sacred fire burns, as it were, but it *was* nice to have the girls make so much of me, and it was nice, too—kind of nice, anyhow—to know that some of them were jealous. And it was nice to have the younger girls ask if they might introduce their mothers and fathers to me when they came to visit them, and to see the little minims swell with pride when I remembered to nod to them. And now there was another Author at St. Catharine's—and a poetess at that—and she would get all the attention, I knew.

So my heart kept sinking down more and more, till I was afraid something might happen if I stayed there, and I turned and left as quietly as we had come. Maudie followed me. When we got a long distance from the poetess

Maudie grabbed my arm and asked me if I didn't think it was wonderful. Her eyes were shining and she was very much excited still. Then suddenly I remembered something and I felt a little better. I asked Maudie if Adeline had ever really *written* any poems, or if she just stood round like that and thought about them all to herself.

Maudie put her hand in her pocket without a word and drew out—well, I wouldn't dare to say how many poems of Adeline Thurston's she drew out, because you would surely think I was exaggerating. But there were so many of them that Maudie had to carry her pocket-handkerchief in the front of her shirt-waist. We sat down and read them then and there; and if I felt sick before, you can believe I felt sicker as I read the outpourings of that gifted soul of fire. Maudie wouldn't let me keep any of them even long enough to copy, but I remember one or two, and the first one went something like this:

THE SONG OF THE SEA

The song of the sea is in my ear,
Its lonely, dreary cry I hear.
It calls to me, would I could go
And leave this world of friend and foe.
Oh, would that on the drifting sea
My body would float along so free,

My heart still back in life with Maude,
My soul in heaven, near to God.

I didn't like it very well—that one. There seemed to me to be something the matter with it, somehow, though it was certainly sad and tragic. Maudie thought it was beautiful—especially the last two lines. I learned it by heart and recited it to Mabel Blossom later, after Maudie said I might, and Mabel thought there was something the matter with it, too; and she said the poetess seemed to be so kind of scattered toward the end of the poem that it made her (Mabel) feel nervous. I felt better right away when Mabel said that, for the child has an unerring literary instinct and likes all my stories. I remembered another poem and said it, and we didn't like that very much, either. It went like this:

WHEN I AM GONE

Oh, bury me deep 'neath the starlit sky,
Oh, bury me deep and long,
Where I can hear the whippoorwill's twilight cry
And list to the robin's song.
And drop no tear on my new-made mound,
Nor moan o'er my lifeless clay.
'Tis true that my body is underground,
But my soul will be far away.

Mabel said she never knew any one who seemed so anxious to have her body and soul in different places, but I reminded her that all poets were like that. It goes with the artistic temperament, and I said I had often felt it myself. Then Mabel giggled, and I didn't mind a bit. She said she was giggling at the poetry, and I laughed, too, and I cannot tell you the strange relief I felt all of a sudden. Sister Irmingarde says the artistic temperament is mercurial, and I guess she is right. My nature is very buoyant except when I'm writing stories. Then I most always feel sad and life seems terrible. Mabel Blossom says she feels just the same, but I'm sure I don't know why she should. *She* doesn't write the stories; but she says it is because she is in them. Perhaps that does give her a claim to the artistic temperament.

But I'm away ahead of my story again, which is one of my most serious literary faults. I will return to Maudie and the poems she and I read by the river bank.

Maudie thought all the poems were beautiful. Of course, she said, they were not as good as Keats—she raves over Keats—nor as good as one or two things Browning did—"Blue ran the flash across, violets were born," for instance.

She is always quoting that. But she said Adeline Thurston was young, and if she lived a few years more would give some great songs to the world. She said it just that way. And she said they showed that Adeline was a deep student of life, like us, and "probed humanity's heart to its core." She took that about humanity's heart from a lecture we had last month. She said Adeline had said she might bring me to the river to look at her, from a distance, but we were not to speak or make a noise, as we might disturb some Thought. And Adeline said she might tell a few of the other girls, too, but to warn them not to disturb her or to address her too abruptly when they met her. She said a poem getting born in the heart was like a bird sitting on a tree, and that it was easily scared away.

Well, that was the beginning of it all. I will now describe what followed. Maudie told a few more girls, and then more and more, till pretty soon the whole school knew it, and no one talked of anything but Adeline and her poetry. Every evening at sunset she disappeared, and a little later all the girls would follow very quietly and look at her from a distance as she stood bathed in the sun's dying rays. I've said that before, but it's such

a good thing I'm going to say it again. Adeline always had her head back and her arms out and her lips parted. I didn't go after the first time. Once was enough. But every one else did, and talked and talked and talked till I was dreadfully tired of it, especially as I was writing a story at the time, and they used to interrupt me, which they never did in the dear old days that are no more. Adeline's room was in a corner of the old wing, and its one window looked over the river and distant hills. None of the Sisters could see that window from the Cloister, and only two of the girls could, but these two said a light burned in Adeline's room all night long. They used to wake up and look at it, and tell the other girls the next day. And every morning Adeline would come to breakfast as pale as chalk and tired to death, and pressing her hands against her heart and looking inscrutable when any one spoke to her. Of course the Sisters didn't know she worked nights, or they would have stopped it. She told Maudie she knew she was not long for life, so she must use every moment and finish her book of poems so it could be published right after she died. Maudie cried when she told me that. She said it seemed so sad. I did

not cry. Neither did Mabel Blossom. She giggled. Oh, how I love Mabel's light-hearted girlishness and how I enjoy her society! I wish to say right out in this story that she is the most congenial friend I have at St. Catharine's.

One night about eleven o'clock I was tossing feverishly on my couch, and thinking of my Art and of Adeline's Art, and wondering why the girls liked poetry so much better than stories. I was not jealous; I was just puzzled; and no plots were stirring in me, and I didn't care. I made a discovery, too. I learned that the Artist's Art is not enough to fill life. You need other things. You do your stories for the good of the world and to make it happy. And if the world won't read them or listen to them, it's no fun to write them. Then I felt dreadfully homesick and very unhappy, and I wanted to go home to mamma and my sister Grace, and Georgie.

Just then I heard a stealthy step at my portal, and then the door began to open very quietly. I was so unhappy that if it was burglars I didn't care, but I sat up in bed and looked, and it was Mabel Blossom in her nightgown with a bathrobe over it. She said:

"May, are you awake? Don't be fright-

ened, but get up and come with me. I've got something to show you. Don't ask any questions, but hurry."

So I got up and slipped into the kimono Grace gave me Christmas. It's silk, and dark red and blue, and it has flowing sleeves, and Mabel and Maudie say it's very becoming to me. And I went confidingly and trustfully out into the dark hall with my dear friend Mabel, though I hadn't the least idea what she was going to do. We stole along hand in hand till we came to the door of Adeline Thurston's room. Then Mabel stopped and very quietly and coolly opened it and signed to me to look in. I did. I thought maybe Adeline expected us, but, alas! alas! she did not. She was in bed, all undressed, sound asleep, and breathing long, even breaths. And right near the window, burning its very best, was a little lamp, shining out into the night the way the widow's lamp does when she puts it into the window for her wandering sailor son. We both looked good and hard, and we looked and looked, but there was no mistake. Adeline was in bed and sleeping, and the lamp was put there so those two girls who could see it *would* see it and think she was working. Mabel and I crept back to my room in silence, and ther

I said perhaps Adeline had worked and had just fallen into an exhausted slumber, and would soon awake and get up. Mabel giggled and said Adeline had been in the same kind of an exhausted slumber the night before when she had looked. And she giggled again and told me to go to bed, and that she would convince me yet. That was about eleven o'clock. Would you believe it,—three hours later, at two, Mabel came again and we did the same thing, and we saw the same picture—the faithful lamp, put where it would do the most good, and the slumbering poet.

In the mean time I had been thinking it all over. I was so excited I couldn't sleep much, and the second time we saw it I told Mabel that it must be a secret between us and that we must never, never tell. I said it would be dreadful for the school to have such a thing come out. Then Mabel looked at me and asked if it was right to have the girls fooled like that. But I knew we must be just, for, after all, Adeline did write the poems, and it was not our affair when she did it, and of course we had no right in her bedroom. We had spied on her and it was dishonorable. I felt dreadfully about that, for a distinguished officer's daughter must have what Sister Irmingarde calls

"a high standard of personal honor." So I convinced Mabel, and she promised not to tell any one. Then she went right straight to Maudie Joyce's room and woke her and led her to Adeline's room, just as she had led me, and let her see with her own eyes. I did not know that till the next day. Then Mabel explained that she had not *told* Maudie anything; she had just let her *see* for herself.

At breakfast, when none of the Sisters was near, Mabel asked Adeline quite carelessly if she had worked the night before. Adeline was rolling her eyes and pressing her head and looking exhausted the way she always did in the morning. She said at once that she had not "slept a wink" the night before, as she was "engaged on an important piece of work." And then, for the first time, she said to us all what she had told Maudie Joyce so often.

"I shall not inhabit this frail body long," she sighed, "so I must use every moment day and night." Maudie Joyce looked at her when she said this, and I saw the look. I knew right off that either Mabel Blossom had told or Maudie had discovered for herself the shameful, blighting truth.

That evening Maudie Joyce came to my room and kissed me the minute I

opened the door. Then she cried and said she had treated me shamefully, and asked if I hated her; and I said I didn't—that I loved her next to mamma and papa and Grace and Georgie and Jack and Mabel Blossom. It didn't seem to cheer her very much, though, but she went on to tell me something that made me gasp and sit down in a hurry, I can tell you. She said that after breakfast she had gone right to Adeline Thurston's room and asked her why she deceived us so, and Adeline cried and confessed that she had made up the whole thing because she wanted to be popular!

Then Maudie Joyce rose in her just and queenly wrath and paced the floor with swift footsteps as she told me what happened next. "I told her she could either confess to the girls and let us forget and begin all over," Maudie said, "or that I would tell them myself, and she would be left in Outer Darkness the rest of the year. So she said she would confess. She is doing it now. I didn't want to listen to it all again, and somehow I knew you wouldn't have gone to hear it, either. You're a trump, May Iverson."

Oh, how my heart swelled as I listened to those last sweet words! And right then I made another discovery. Of course one

loves one's parents and sister and brother and little nephew and Mabel Blossom, but there is something different about the love you feel for a girl like Maudie Joyce. It's so vast, so intense, so all-absorbing! But I didn't tell Maudie so. I just kissed her and said it was all right and she was a dear thing. Alas! how insufficient are mere words to convey the deepest emotions of the human heart!

It is strange, but the very minute that matter was settled I began to feel queer —broody and intense and absent-minded, and full of strange, sad thoughts about life. Sister Irmingarde looked worried last night and asked if I wasn't under some nervous strain, but it wasn't that. It's another story coming!

"Dad's Grave"

BY J. ELWIN SMITH

IT was that between-time of spring and summer when the sunshine is full of a peculiar soft radiance, and vegetation has something of the child's look of wonder clinging about it, a fleeting transient expression, exquisitely pure and delicate, the first freshness of the new life, unsullied as yet by heat or dust. Nowhere did the light seem to rest so tenderly, or with such revelation of the mystic rising again of nature from hidden germ and embryo, as in the green little cemetery shut in from the street, with its mission of guardianship. Every form seemed to tingle and thrill with life; the birds pouring it out again in quick, short, or long trilling notes; the fresh young leaves with their evanescent purity of tint; the bushes that looked as if some one had shaken them suddenly into pink, yellow, and white blossoming; the hosts of little black ants running to

and fro on the sandy paths. The very slenderest blade of grass thrusting itself up from the sod was a tiny being with the right to its moment of existence in the bright sunshine; and there was the sense of the gladness of living that touches one so strangely often where the dead are resting. It is as if Life loved to creep up close to Death, and lay her warm pulsating hand over his silence and coldness. Over by the fence, to the right of the little stone cemetery chapel, were the numbered graves. They lay in long rows, divided by the narrowest of foot-paths, and at the head of every mound was its number, sometimes dangling from a slender iron prop, sometimes marked simply on an oblong piece of wood driven deep into the ground. The foot-soldiers, the rank and file of the dead, seemed these graves; the many who had won no distinction, who bore no decoration of grief or love, of worldly respect or wealth. If man or woman, young or old, slept here, there was nothing to tell; no epitome of their virtues, none of the clinging sorrow that so often breathes to us from a memorial inscription. Side by side, shoulder to shoulder, in mute unconscious fellowship they lay, resting as profoundly as, and not one whit less in-

vested with death's mystery and dignity than their neighbors, the occupants of the enclosures at a little distance, whose headstones gleamed white and red through the living grace of the trees and bushes.

On the broad gravel-walk running past these graves stood three children, for the eldest was scarcely more than a child, though she held the other two protectingly by the hand. The latter were in the dress of city Homes, always subtly pathetic when seen on children, while the elder girl wore a scanty black frock and shabby mourning hat, into which a little bit of rusty-looking crape was twisted for sole trimming. Her eyes were full of tears. Every now and then they brimmed over, and the big drops would roll down, though she was evidently much too responsible a little person to cry out loud.

"Hollo! What's the matter?" said a voice, suddenly. "Anybody belongin' to you buried here?"

The girl turned round with a start. A boy had come up close to them, rather a queer-looking boy, with a tangle of light-colored hair falling over his forehead, big, protruding, pale-blue eyes, in which there was a wandering speculativeness, and a very thin face. His arms and legs were also thin, and he gave the impression of

never being too warm, even in summertime. There was a raggedness about his clothes more suggestive of neglect than absolute poverty. The elbows innocent of patches; the trousers cut short at the knee, and a world too wide for the spindly legs that, encased in loose black stockings, moved half apologetically underneath; the shoes several sizes too large—all combined to produce a certain forlornness of aspect which seemed to cling to the boy, together with a curious old-mannish independence. Perhaps it was this forlorn independence common to both children that drew them instinctively to one another, and prompted the ready confidence of the girl's answer:

"It's dad. But I can't find him. He's got mixed up with somebody else."

"How's that?" said the boy, seating himself on the extreme edge of a neighboring grave. "Didn't you 'tend his funeral?"

The girl shook her head. "Dad had fever awful bad, and I got it too, and we was both took to the hospittle. When I got better, they told me dad was dead and buried, and giv' me this number," holding out a slip of paper.

The boy nodded affirmatively. "And ain't it right?"

"No. When I showed it to the man at the gate, he said there wasn't no such person here; that there must ha' ben a mistake, and dad got buried under the wrong name. And I didn't like to bother him much."

"That's queer," said the boy, walking thoughtfully along one of the narrow footpaths dividing the graves. "What kind of a man was your dad, tall or short?"

"Tall," answered the girl; "taller than him," pointing to a man passing at a little distance; "thin too, kind a lathy like;" and her eyes hung on the boy's movements with a sort of unreasoning hope.

Very critically, and with a judicial compression of the lips, he eyed the mounds on either hand, as if measuring the dimensions of the hidden occupant. Then, with a shake of the head at once profound and discouraging, he returned to his former position.

"I guess you won't find him. Is your mother dead too?"

The girl nodded.

"So's mine. That's why I come here so much. She's buried just over there, number 2864."

"Did she die of fever?" asked his com-

panion, for the boy had paused, and was looking at her, evidently expectant of a remark.

"No; 'sumption. Dad says, when he's drunk, that I'm goin' off just like her, and the sooner the better. I guess I am, too. My cough's awful bad at times."

"Ain't you scared?" said the girl, watching him with wide, curious eyes.

"Not much. I guess it ain't any worse than livin' down here. Dad knocks one round a good deal when he's drunk. I wonder, though, if they make any diff'rence up there between the people that buys their own graves and them that's buried by the parish."

"Why?"

"'Cause dad bought mother's grave, and I guess if I was to die right off now, he'd buy mine too. But he's drinkin' so that if I'm long about it he won't have no money left, and the parish 'll have to bury me. I wonder if it makes any diff'rence?"

There was genuine anxiety in the boy's tone, and his big blue eyes rested on the girl with almost a pleading look. The latter did not answer for a moment. She felt, dumbly but strongly, that it must make a very great difference indeed, and that a person leaving this world rightful

proprietor of his own grave, so to speak, could not fail to be more thought of anywhere else than the recipient of charity. But she lacked words to express herself in, and her mind was full of another idea.

"Perhaps you won't know your mother again," she said. "She'll be an angel now, won't she?"

The boy shook his head decisively. "I guess they didn't make an angel of mother. Her hands was all thin and hard, and her face too, and she hadn't any good clothes. It's the fine folks they make the angels out of, I guess; the people with tumstones and fam'ly vaults. Did you ever see the vaults?"

"No."

"It's queer." The thin eager look on the boy's face seemed to intensify, and he drew up his emaciated knees, hugging them with his arms. "You go along a road, and you come to a door in the side of the hill, and often it's open so's you can peep in, and there's a coffin up on a shelf, sometimes two, and there's doors all along the hill. It's queer. It's like walkin' along a street where the people's all dead."

The girl stood looking at him silently. He was very strange, this boy. Perhaps

it was because he was going to die so soon.

Just then one of the children who had strayed away came back, and pulling at her sister's dress, said, "Ain't you comin' to find dad, Susy?"

"I can't, Polly dear. Dad's got lost." And again the steady gray eyes filled up, while the lip quivered.

The boy looked on sympathetically. "I tell you what you'd better do," he said at last; "you'd better 'dopt a grave."

"What?" asked Susy, astonished, and doubtful if she could have heard aright.

"'Dopt one, like people does children out of Homes. Choose one that ain't got a number, call it your dad's and take care of it fur him."

"But s'posin' it ain't him?" said the girl, dubiously.

Adoption to her mind meant the taking care of very little children, and the thought of appropriating a long grave, with probably a full-grown man or woman inside, rather startled her. Besides, there was something not altogether respectable in being adopted. It was as much as saying that a person or grave had no natural belongings. The buried somebody mightn't like it if he knew.

"Perhaps whoever it is 'll tell your

dad you meant it fur him. Perhaps he knows ev'rything now."

There was an odd jumble of speculativeness and other-world reasoning in the boy. Constantly in the cemetery, influenced daily by the sombreness of its happenings, quaint, curious fancies had grown up in him about the never-ebbing, continually increasing population around him. His child inquisitiveness, instead of being lavished on outward things, had busied itself with the waking up of all these silent people in a world created for them by his imagination on the foundation of a vague belief. To many of the nameless ones he had given titles, fashioning histories for them too, both past and future. There were enclosures full of graves over which he brooded with a sort of quiet content, as if assisting at a peaceful family reunion, while a solitary mound shut in by a railing troubled him until another came to bear it company. But it was always the occupants of the handsomest lots, those over whom rose the stateliest headstones, who filled the proudest positions in that other world of his imagination. The poor had their place too—a place corresponding in a measure to their rank in the cemetery—but his feeling of fitness would have been

shocked by the very suggestion that there could be waiting for them a like consideration with the rich, whom living he passed sometimes on the paths of the cemetery, never without a shrinking consciousness of his own raggedness and general inferiority, and who, when dead, came in slow-moving hearses and silver-plated coffins, and were buried with flowers and much ceremonial, and above whom glittered in gilt lettering their names and dates of birth and death, and generally a text out of the Bible besides, which, to his mind, was a sort of armorial distinction of the wealthy, a prerogative which it would have been presumption in a poor grave to boast.

"Here's one without any number," he said; "long too, a six-footer, I guess."

Susy went over to him. The grave they were looking at lay apart from the others, not far from the high board fence that separated this portion of the cemetery from the narrow poor streets running up to it. The grass, less carefully cut just here, screened it so effectually that at a distance the mound was invisible. The children could hardly have chosen a better subject for adoption. In its solitariness and isolation it might very well have been the last resting-place of a

life that, conscious of failure, had crept away from human companionship, with a mute acceptance of indifference and neglect.

"I tell you what"—the boy's eyes were wandering over the grass around, as if searching for something—"I'll see if I can't pick up a bit of wood like there is at the head of those other graves, and drive it in here, and you can mark your number on it. How soon can you come again?"

"Not afore next Sunday. I'm in a place, and I get out Sundays and take the children fur a walk."

"I come a'most ev'ry day," said the boy, with a sense of superior advantages. "Nobody bothers you here, and the fun'rals is wonderful sometimes. There was a beauty yesterday — twenty carriages, and two lodges walkin' besides, with aperns in front, and the coffin just heaped up with flowers." Then, regretfully, "Ain't it a pity people couldn't take just a peep out of the end of the hearse, and see all that's follerin' after them? Don't you think they'd like it?"

Susy shook her head. "Not if they knowed they was goin' to be buried. I wouldn't."

"I would. Perhaps they didn't know

all their lives how much people thought of them. It's queer, dyin', ain't it?" he continued, gazing meditatively at the more frequented part of the cemetery, where the moving figures of the people, the swift alternations of sunshine and shadow under the passage of clouds, and the foliage full of the light motion of the summer wind threw into strange solemn contrast the immobility of the dead beneath, who, encased in the rigid narrowness of these innumerable mounds, seemed to be waiting with dumb infinite patience the revelation of the meaning of death. "Don't it make you feel funny sometimes, thinkin' about it?"

Susy felt embarrassed and uncomfortable. In her little experience, chiefly confined to taking care of dad and the children, she had never come across such speculations. They wakened in her the sudden shyness that seizes most children when any unusual demand is made on their apprehension or sympathies. What did this boy, otherwise so nice and kind, say such things for? She felt vaguely that this propensity of his was connected in some way with the oddness of his appearance, and that if he hadn't such very thin legs and large eyes he would probably be much more sensible. She gave a

short little uneasy laugh, and then suddenly remembering the children, turned, with a sense of escape, to look for them. They were playing a little distance off in a heap of sand thrown up close to the fence by the side of a partially dug grave, and screened from view by an enormous syringa-bush.

"What ever are you doin', children?" said Susy as she drew near.

Tommy lifted his round face, flushed with heat and exertion. "We're playin' fun'ral, Susy. Polly's dead, and I'm diggin' a grave to bury her in."

Polly, who was lying decorously stretched out, with her feet close together and her hands folded demurely across her breast, but whose dark eyes, in spite of Tommy's admonitions, would open occasionally for a surreptitious peep at outside matters, turned her fat little neck toward her sister with an expression of pleased importance.

"Get up directly, Polly," said Susy, shocked at such irreverent make-believe, and uncomfortably conscious that the wrong-doing of the children was partly attributable to her own unusual neglect of them; "and if you don't leave the sand alone, Tommy, the man 'll come and put you out, and never let you in here no

more. Come over, like good children, and see what we're doin' to dad's grave."

Tommy threw down his impromptu spade, while Polly rose with a sense of crushed dignity and mortified feeling of public disapproval, and the two trailed unwillingly after their sister as she went back to the adopted grave. Meanwhile the boy had been active. Somewhere about in the grass he had discovered a piece of board of convenient size and shape, and clearing a space with his hands, he was thrusting it into the ground at the head of the grave, but in a feeble, uncertain way. He eyed it suspiciously a second or two, as if expecting to see it flatten out suddenly on the grass.

"I guess it's all right fur to-day," he said at last. "I'll fix it steady as a rock afore next Sunday. Would you like me to mark the number fur you? I've got chalk."

Susy handed him the paper without speaking, and from a ragged side pocket, which seemed to have far reaches into the lining, and to be exceedingly difficult of exploration, he produced an attenuated piece of chalk. He read the number first, 3040, and then began tracing it laboriously on the wood, regarded almost reverently by Tommy and Polly as a per-

son who, though a little ragged, had been clever enough to discover dad's grave amongst so many others of exactly the same kind.

"Figgers is jiggy things to make when you ain't got a smooth board," he remarked when, with painfully crooked fingers and slightly opened mouth, he had rounded the intricacies of the final 0; "but I guess you can read it plain enough."

He got up from his knees and retreated backward, step by step, as if trying to discover at what range the chalk marks became invisible. Susy, a sort of motherly content shining in her face, sat down beside the grave and rested her hand on it gently, as if in a new experience and amongst strange surroundings she felt herself still "takin' care of dad," while Tommy rolled over on the sod at her feet, and lay blinking up with a kind of little animal enjoyment of the big warm sunshine, and Polly, stretched half over the mound, began picking out the longest blades of grass and making them into a posy.

A Transplanted Boy

BY CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON

I

THE old Rondinelli Palace at Pisa has been for many years a boarding-house, or *pension,* called Casa Corti. The establishment is a large one, and Madame Corti, the proprietress, believes that it has much distinction.

One evening in the spring of 1880 a pretty little American, who looked not more than twenty-five years old, but who was thirty-three, left the drawing-room where the seventy boarders were assembled after dinner, and mounted to her own quarters. She did not care for tea, or whist, or books on art, or wool-work; and, besides, her little boy Maso was waiting for her.

"Oh, how early you've come up! I'm awful glad," said Maso, as she entered her bedroom on the third floor. It was a large room, shabbily furnished in yellow,

the frescoed walls representing the Bay of Naples. Maso was lying on the rug, with his dog by his side.

"Why are you in the dark?" said his mother. There was a smouldering fire on the hearth; for though the day had been fine (it was the 15th of March), the old palace had a way of developing unexpected shivers in the evening. In spite of these shivers, however, this was the only room where there was a fire. Mrs. Roscoe lighted the lamp and put on the pink shade; then she drew the small Italian sticks together on the hearth, threw on a dozen pine cones, and with the bellows blew the whole into a brilliant blaze. Next she put a key into the Bay of Naples, unlocked a wave, and drew out a small Vienna coffee-pot.

"Are we going to have coffee? Jolly!" said the boy.

His mother made the coffee; then she took from the same concealed cupboard, which had been drilled in the solid stone of the wall, a little glass jug shaped like a lachrymal from the catacombs, which contained cream; sugar in a bowl; cakes, and a box of marrons glacés. Maso gave a Hi! of delight as each dainty appeared, and made his dog sit on his hind legs. "I say, mother, what were they all laugh-

ing about at dinner? Something you said?"

"They always laugh; they appear never to have heard a joke before. That about the bishops, now, that is as old as the hills." Leaning back in her easy-chair before the fire, with Maso established at her feet, enjoying his cake and coffee, she gave a long yawn. "Oh, what a stupid life!"

Maso was well accustomed to this exclamation. But when he had his mother to himself, and when the room was so bright and so full of fragrant aromas, he saw no reason to echo it. "Well, *I* think it's just gay!" he answered. "Mr. Tiber, beg!" Mr. Tiber begged, and received a morsel of cake.

Mrs. Roscoe, after drinking her coffee, had taken up a new novel. "Perhaps you had better study a little," she suggested.

Maso made a grimace. But as the coffee was gone and the cakes were eaten, he complied; that is, he complied after he had made Mr. Tiber go through his tricks. This took time; for Mr. Tiber, having swallowed a good deal of cake himself, was lazy. At last, after he had been persuaded to show to the world the excellent education he had received, his

master decided to go on with his own, and went to get his books, which were on the shelf at the other end of the long room. It pleased him to make this little journey on his heels, with his toes sharply upturned in the air—a feat which required much balancing.

"That is the way you run down the heels of your shoes so," his mother remarked, glancing at his contortions.

"It doesn't hurt them much on the *carpet*," replied the boy.

"Mercy! You don't go staggering through the streets in that way, do you?"

"Only back streets."

He was now returning in the same obstructed manner, carrying his books. He placed them upon the table where the lamp was standing; then he lifted Mr. Tiber to the top of the same table and made him lie down; next, seating himself, he opened a battered school-book, a United States History, and, after looking at the pictures for a while, he began at last to repeat two dates to himself in a singsong whisper. Maso was passing through the period when a boy can be very plain, even hideous, in appearance, without any perception of the fact in the minds of his relatives, who see in him the little toddler still, or else the future

man; other persons, however, are apt to see a creature all hands and feet, with a big, uncertain mouth, and an omnipresent awkwardness. Maso, in addition to this, was short and ill developed, with inexpressive eyes and many large freckles. His features were not well cut; his complexion was pale; his straight hair was of a reddish hue. None of the mother's beauties were repeated in the child. Such as he was, however, she loved him, and he repaid her love by a deep adoration; to him, besides being "mother," she was the most beautiful being in the whole world, and also the cleverest.

While he was vaguely murmuring his dates, and rocking himself backwards and forwards in time with the murmur, there came a tap at the door. It was Miss Spring. "I have looked in to bid you good-by," she said, entering. "I am going to Munich to-morrow."

"Isn't that sudden?" said Mrs. Roscoe. "The torn chair is the most comfortable. Have a marron?"

"Thank you; I seldom eat sweets. No, it is not sudden."

"Shall I make you a cup of coffee?"

"Thank you; I don't take coffee."

Mrs. Roscoe pushed a footstool across the rug.

"Thank you; I never need footstools."

"Superior to all the delights of womankind!"

Miss Spring came out of her abstraction and laughed. "Not superior; only bilious, and long-legged." Then her face grew grave again. "Do you consider Pisa an attractive place for a permanent residence?" she inquired, fixing her eyes upon her hostess, who, having offered all the hospitable attentions in her power, was now leaning back again, her feet on a hassock.

"Attractive? Heavens! no."

"Yet you stay here? I think I have seen you here, at intervals, for something like seven years?"

"Don't count them; I hate the sound," said Mrs. Roscoe. "My wish is—my hope is—to live in Paris; I get there once in a while, and then I always have to give it up and come away. Italy is cheap, and Pisa is the cheapest place in Italy."

"So that is your reason for remaining," said Miss Spring, reflectively.

"What other reason on earth *could* there be?"

"The equable climate."

"I hate equable climates. No, we're not here for climates. Not for Benozzo; nor for Niccola the Pisan, and that ever-

lasting old sarcophagus that they are always talking about; nor for the Leaning Tower either. I perfectly hate the Leaning Tower!"

Miss Spring gazed at the fire. "I may as well acknowledge that it was those very things that brought me here in the beginning, the things you don't care for: Niccola and the revival of sculpture; the early masters. But I have not found them satisfying. I have tried to care for that sarcophagus; but the truth is that I remain perfectly cold before it. And the Campo Santo frescoes seem to me out of drawing. As to the Shelley memories, do you know what I thought of the other day? Supposing that Shelley and Byron were residing here at this moment—Shelley with that queerness about his first wife hanging over him, and Byron living as we know he lived in the Toscanelli palace—do you think that these ladies in the pension who now sketch the Toscanelli and sketch Shelley's windows, who go to Lerici and rave over Casa Magni, who make pilgrimages to the very spot on the beach where Byron and Trelawney built the funeral pyre—do you think that a single one of them would call, if it were to-day, upon Mary Shelley? Or like to have Shelley and Byron

dropping in here for afternoon tea, with the chance of meeting the curates?"

"If they met them, they couldn't outtalk them," answered Violet, laughing. "Curates always want to explain something they said the day before. As to the calling and the tea, what would *you* do?"

"I should be consistent," responded Miss Spring, with dignity. "I should call. And I should be happy to see them here in return."

"Well, you'd be safe," said Violet. "Shelley, Byron, Trelawney, all together, would never dare to flirt with Roberta Spring!" She could say this without malice, for her visitor was undeniably a handsome woman.

Miss Spring, meanwhile, had risen; going to the table, she put on her glasses and bent over Maso's book. "History?"

"Yes, 'm. I haven't got very far yet," Maso answered.

"Reader. Copy-book. Geography. Spelling-book. Arithmetic," said Miss Spring, turning the books over one by one. "The Arithmetic appears to be the cleanest."

"Disuse," said Mrs. Roscoe, from her easy-chair. "As I am Maso's teacher, and as I hate arithmetic, we have never

gone very far. I don't know what we shall do when we get to fractions!"

"And what is your dog doing on the table, may I ask?" inquired the visitor, surveying Mr. Tiber coldly.

"Oh, he helps lots. I couldn't study at all without him," explained Maso, with eagerness.

"Well!" said Miss Spring. She never could comprehend what she called "all this dog business" of the Roscoes. And their dog language (they had one) routed her completely.

"Why did you name him Mr. Tiber?" pursued the visitor, in her grave voice.

"We didn't; he was already named," explained Mrs. Roscoe. "We bought him of an old lady in Rome, who had three; she had named them after Italian rivers: Mr. Arno, Mr. Tiber, and Miss Dora Ripaira."

"Miss Dora Ripaira—well!" said Miss Spring. Then she turned to subjects more within her comprehension. "It is a pity I am going away, Maso, for I could have taught you arithmetic; I like to teach arithmetic."

Maso made no answer save an imbecile grin. His mother gesticulated at him behind Miss Spring's back. Then he muttered, "Thank you, 'm," hoping fer-

vently that the Munich plan was secure.

"I shall get a tutor for Maso before long," remarked Mrs. Roscoe, as Miss Spring came back to the fire. "Later, my idea is to have him go to Oxford."

Miss Spring looked as though she were uttering, mentally, another "well!" The lack of agreement in the various statements of her pretty little countrywoman always puzzled her; she could understand crime better than inconsistency.

"Shall you stay long in Munich?" Violet inquired.

"That depends." Miss Spring had not seated herself. "Would you mind coming to my room for a few minutes?" she added.

"There's no fire; I shall freeze to death!" thought Violet. "If you like," she answered aloud. And together they ascended to the upper story, where, at the top of two unexpected steps, was Miss Spring's door. A trunk, locked and strapped, stood in the centre of the floor; an open travelling-bag, placed on a chair, gaped for the toilet articles, which were ranged on the table together, so that nothing should be forgotten at the early morning start—a cheap hair-brush and stout comb, an unadorned wooden box

containing hair-pins and a scissors, a particularly hideous travelling pin-cushion. Violet Roscoe gazed at these articles, fascinated by their ugliness; she herself possessed a long row of vials and brushes, boxes and mirrors, of silver, crystal, and ivory, and believed that she could not live without them.

"I thought I would not go into the subject before Maso," began Miss Spring, as she closed the door. "Such explanations sometimes unsettle a boy; his may not be a mind to which inquiry is necessary. My visit to Munich has an object. I am going to study music."

"Music?" repeated Mrs. Roscoe, surprised. "I didn't know you cared for it."

"But it remains to be seen whether I care, doesn't it? One cannot tell until one has tried. This is the case: I am now thirty-seven years of age. I have given a good deal of attention to astronomy and to mathematics; I am an evolutionist, a realist, a member of the Society for Psychical Research; Herbert Spencer's works always travel with me. These studies have been extremely interesting. And yet I find that I am not fully satisfied, Mrs. Roscoe. And it has been a disappointment. I determined,

therefore, to try some of those intellectual influences which do not appeal solely to reason. They appear to give pleasure to large numbers of mankind, so there must be something in them. What that is I resolved to find out. I began with sculpture. Then painting. But they have given me no pleasure whatever. Music is third on the list. So now I am going to try that."

Mrs. Roscoe gave a spring and seated herself on the bed, with her feet under her, Turkish fashion; the floor was really too cold. "No use trying music unless you like it," she said.

"I have never *dis*liked it. My attitude will be that of an impartial investigator," explained Miss Spring. "I have, of course, no expectation of becoming a performer; but I shall study the theory of harmony, the science of musical composition, its structure—"

"Structure? Stuff! You've got to *feel* it," said Violet.

"Very well. I am perfectly willing to feel; that is, in fact, what I wish. Let them *make* me feel. If it is an affair of the emotions, let them rouse *my* emotions," answered Roberta.

"If you would swallow a marron occasionally, and drink a cup of good

coffee with cream; if you would have some ivory brushes and crystal scent-bottles, instead of those hideous objects," said Violet, glancing towards the table; "if you would get some pretty dresses once in a while—I think satisfaction would be nearer."

Miss Spring looked up quickly. "You think I have been too ascetic? Is that what you mean?"

"Oh, I never mean anything," answered Violet, hugging herself to keep down a shiver.

"I knew I should get a new idea out of you, Mrs. Roscoe. I always do," said Roberta, frankly. "And this time it is an important one; it is a side light which I had not thought of myself at all. I shall go to Munich to-morrow. But I will add this: if music is not a success, perhaps I may some time try your plan."

"Plan? Horrible! I haven't any," said Violet, escaping towards the door.

"It's an unconscious one; it is, possibly, instinctive truth," said Miss Spring, as she shook hands with her departing guest. "And instinctive truth is the most valuable."

Violet ran back to her own warm quarters. "You don't mean to say, Maso, that you've stopped studying al-

ready?" she said, as she entered and seated herself before her fire again, with a sigh of content. "Nice lessons you'll have for me to-morrow."

"They're all O. K.," responded the boy. He had his paint-box before him, and was painting the Indians in his History.

"Well, go to bed, then."

"Yes, 'm."

At half past ten, happening to turn her head while she cut open the pages of her novel, she saw that he was still there. "Maso, do you hear me? Go to bed."

"Yes, 'm." He painted faster, making hideous grimaces with his protruded lips, which unconsciously followed the strokes of his brush up and down. The picture finished at last, he rose. "Mr. Tiber, pim."

At eleven, Mrs. Roscoe finished her novel and threw it down. "Women who write don't know much about love-affairs," was her reflection. "And those of us who have love-affairs don't write!" She rose. "Maso, you here still? I thought you went to bed an hour ago!"

"Well, I did begin. I put my shoes outside." He extended his shoeless feet in proof. "Then I just came back for a minute."

His mother looked over his shoulder. "That same old fairy-book! Who would suppose you were twelve years old?"

"Thirteen," said Maso, coloring.

"So you are. But only two weeks ago. Never mind; you'll be a tall man yet—a great big thing striding about, whom I shall not care half so much for as I do for my little boy." She kissed him. "All your father's family are tall, and you look just like them."

Maso nestled closer as she stood beside him. "How did father look? I don't remember him much."

"Much? You don't remember him at all; he died when you were six months old—a little teenty baby."

"I say, mother, how long have we been over here?"

"I came abroad when you were not quite two."

"Aren't we ever going back?"

"If you could once see Coesville!" was Mrs. Roscoe's emphatic reply.

II

"Hist, Maso! Take this in to your lady mother," said Giulio. "I made it myself, so it's good." Giulio, one of the

dining-room waiters at Casa Corti, was devoted to the Roscoes. Though he was master of a mysterious French polyglot, he used at present his own tongue, for Maso spoke Italian as readily as he did, and in much the same fashion.

Maso took the cup, and Giulio disappeared. As the boy was carrying the broth carefully towards his mother's door, Madame Corti passed him. She paused.

"Ah, Master Roscoe, I am relieved to learn that your mother is better. Will you tell her, with my compliments, that I advise her to go at once to the Bagni to make her recovery? She ought to go to-morrow. That is the air required for convalescence."

Maso repeated this to his mother: "'That is the air required for convalescence,' she said."

"And 'this is the room required for spring tourists,' she meant. Did she name a day—the angel?"

"Well, she did say to-morrow," Maso admitted.

"Old cat! She is dying to turn me out; she is so dreadfully afraid that the word fever will hurt her house. All the servants are sworn to call it rheumatism."

"See here, mother, Giulio sent you this."

"I don't want any of their messes."

"But he made it himself, so it's good." He knelt down beside her sofa, holding up the cup coaxingly.

"Beef tea," said Mrs. Roscoe, drawing down her upper lip. But she took a little to please him.

"Just a little more."

She took more.

"A little *teenty* more."

"You scamp! You think it's great fun to give directions, don't you?"

Maso, who had put the emptied cup back on the table, gave a leap of glee because she had taken so much.

"Don't walk on your hands," said his mother, in alarm. "It makes me too nervous."

It was the 12th of April, and she had been ill two weeks. An attack of bronchitis had prostrated her suddenly, and the bronchitis had been followed by an intermittent fever, which left her weak.

"I say, mother, let's go," said Maso. "It's so nice at the Bagni—all trees and everything. Miss Anderson 'll come and pack."

"If we do go to the Bagni we cannot stay at the hotel," said Mrs. Roscoe,

gloomily. "This year we shall have to find some cheaper place. I have been counting upon money from home that hasn't come."

"But it *will* come," said Maso, with confidence.

"Have you much acquaintance with Reuben John?"

He had no very clear idea as to the identity of Reuben John, save that he was some sort of a dreadful relative in America.

"Well, the Bagni's nice," he answered, "no matter where we stay. And I know Miss Anderson 'll come and pack."

"You mustn't say a word to her about it. I have got to write a note, as it is, and ask her to wait for her money until winter. Dr. Prior, too."

"Well, they'll do it; they'll do it in a minute, and be glad to," said Maso, still confident.

"I am sure I don't know why," commented his mother, turning her head upon the pillow fretfully.

"Why, mother, they'll do it because it's you. They think everything of you; everybody does," said the boy, adoringly.

Violet Roscoe laughed. It took but little to cheer her. "If you don't brush your hair more carefully they won't

think much of *you*," she answered, setting his collar straight.

There was a knock at the door. "Letters," said Maso, returning. He brought her a large envelope, adorned with Italian superlatives of honor and closed with a red seal. "Always so civil," murmured Mrs. Roscoe, examining the decorated address with a pleased smile. Her letters came to a Pisan bank; the bankers reenclosed them in this elaborate way, and sent them to her by their own gilt-buttoned messenger. There was only one letter to-day. She opened it, read the first page, turned the leaf, and then in her weakness she began to sob. Maso in great distress knelt beside her; he put his arm round her neck, and laid his cheek to hers; he did everything he could think of to comfort her. Mr. Tiber, who had been lying at her feet, walked up her back and gave an affectionate lick to her hair. "Mercy! the dog too," she said, drying her eyes. "*Of course* it was Reuben John," she explained, shaking up her pillow.

Maso picked up the fallen letter.

"Don't read it; burn it — horrid thing!" his mother commanded.

He obeyed, striking a match and lighting the edge of the page.

"Not only no money, but in its place a long, hateful, busybodying sermon," continued Mrs. Roscoe, indignantly.

Maso came back from the hearth, and took up the envelope. "Mrs. Thomas R. Coe," he read aloud. "Is our name really Coe, mother?"

"You know it is perfectly well."

"Everybody says Roscoe."

"*I* didn't get it up; all I did was to call myself Mrs. Ross Coe, which is my name, isn't it? I hate Thomas. Then these English got hold of it and made it Ross-Coe and Roscoe. I grew tired of correcting them long ago."

"Then in America I should be Thomas Ross Coe," pursued the boy, still scanning the envelope, and pronouncing the syllables slowly. He was more familiar with Italian names than with American.

"No such luck. Tommy Coe you'd be now. And as you grew older, Tom Coe —like your father before you."

They went to the Bagni, that is, to the baths of Lucca. The journey, short as it was, tired Mrs. Roscoe greatly. They took up their abode in two small rooms in an Italian house which had an unswept stairway and a constantly open door. Maso, disturbed by her illness, but by nothing else—for they had often fol-

lowed a nomadic life for a while when funds were low—scoured the town. He bought cakes and fruit to tempt her appetite; he made coffee. He had no conception that these things were not the proper food for a convalescent; his mother had always lived upon coffee and sweets.

On the first day of May, when they had been following this course for two weeks, they had a visitor. Dr. Prior, who had been called to the Bagni for a day, came to have a look at his former patient. He staid fifteen minutes. When he took leave he asked Maso to show him the way to a certain house. This, however, was but a pretext, for when they reached the street he stopped.

"I dare say ye have friends here?"

"Well," answered Maso, "mother generally knows a good many of the people in the hotel when we are staying there. But this year we ain't."

"Hum! Where are your relatives?"

"I don't know as we've got any. Yes, there's one," pursued Maso, remembering Reuben John. "But he's in America."

The Scotch physician, who was by no means an amiable man, was bluntly honest. "How old are you?" he inquired.

"I'm going on fourteen."

"Never should have supposed ye to be more than eleven. As there appears to be no one else, I must speak to you. Your mother must not stay in this house a day longer; she must have a better place—better air and better food."

Maso's heart gave a great throb. "Is she—is she very ill?"

"Not yet. But she is in a bad way; she coughs. She ought to leave Italy for a while; stay out of it for at least four months. If she doesn't care to go far, Aix-les-Bains would do. Speak to her about it. I fancy ye can arrange it —hey? American boys have their own way, I hear."

Maso went back to his mother's room with his heart in his mouth. When he came in she was asleep; her face looked wan. The boy, cold all over with the new fear, sat down quietly by the window with Mr. Tiber on his lap, and fell into anxious thought. After a while his mother woke. The greasy dinner, packed in greasy tins, came and went. When the room was quiet again he began, tremulously: "How much money have we got, mother?"

"Precious little."

"Mayn't I see how much it is?"

"No; don't bother."

She had eaten nothing. "Mother, won't you please take that money, even if it's little, and go straight off north somewhere? To Aix-les-Bains."

"What are you talking about? Aix-les-Bains? What do you know of Aix-les-Bains?"

"Well, I've heard about it. Say, mother, do go. And Mr. Tiber and me'll stay here. We'll have lots of fun," added the boy, bravely.

"Is that all you care about me?" demanded his mother. Then seeing his face change, "Come here, you silly child," she said. She made him sit down on the rug beside her sofa. "We must sink or swim together, Maso (dear me! we're not much in the swim now); we can't go anywhere, either of us; we can only just manage to live as we're living now. And there won't be any more money until November." She stroked his hair caressingly. His new fear made him notice how thin her wrist had grown.

III

"You will mail these three letters immediately," said Mr. Waterhouse, in Italian, to the hotel porter.

"Si, signore," answered the man, with the national sunny smile, although Waterhouse's final gratuity had been but a franc.

"Now, Tommaso, I must be off; long drive. Sorry it has happened so. Crazy idea her coming at all, as she has enjoyed bad health for years, poor old thing! She may be dead at this moment, and probably, in fact, she *is* dead; but I shall have to go, all the same, in spite of the great expense; she ought to have thought of that. I have explained everything to your mother in that letter; the money is at her own bank in Pisa, and I have sent her the receipt. You have fifty francs with you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Fifty francs — that is ten dollars. More than enough, much more; be careful of it, Tommaso. You will hear from your mother in two days, or sooner, if she telegraphs; in the mean while you will stay quietly where you are."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Waterhouse shook hands with his pupil, and stepping into the waiting carriage, was driven away.

Benjamin F. Waterhouse, as he signed himself (of course the full name was Benjamin Franklin), was an American

who had lived in Europe for nearly half a century, always expecting to go home "next summer." He was very tall, with a face that resembled a damaged portrait of Emerson, and he had been engaged for many years in writing a great work, a Life of Christopher Columbus, which was to supersede all other Lives. As his purse was a light one, he occasionally took pupils, and it was in this way that he had taken Maso, or, as he called him (giving him all the syllables of the Italian Thomas), Tommaso. Only three weeks, however, of his tutorship had passed when he had received a letter announcing that his sister, his only remaining relative, despairing of his return, was coming abroad to see him, in spite of her age and infirmities; she was the "poor old thing" of her dry brother's description, and the voyage apparently had been too great an exertion, for she was lying dangerously ill at Liverpool, and the physician in attendance had telegraphed to Waterhouse to come immediately.

The history of the tutorship was as follows: Money had come from America after all. Mrs. Roscoe (as everybody called her) had been trying for some time, so she told Maso, "to circumvent

Reuben John," and sell a piece of land which she owned in Indiana. Now, unexpectedly, a purchaser had turned up. While she was relating this it seemed to her that her little boy changed into a young man before her eyes. "You've just got to take that money, mother, and go straight up to Aix-les-Bains," said Maso, planting himself before her. "I sha'n't go a single step; I ain't sick, and you are; it's cheaper for me to stay here. There isn't money enough to take us both, for I want you to stay up there *ever* so long; four whole months."

This was the first of many discussions, or rather of astonished exclamations from the mother, met by a stubborn and at last a silent obstinacy on the part of the boy. For of late he had scarcely slept, he had been so anxious; he had discovered that the people in the house, with the usual Italian dread of a cough, believed that "the beautiful little American," as they called his mother, was doomed. Mother and son had never been separated; the mother shed tears over the idea of a separation now; and then a few more because Maso did not "care." "It doesn't seem to be anything to *you*," she declared, reproachfully,

But Maso, grim-faced and wretched, held firm.

In this deadlock Mrs. Roscoe at last had the inspiration of asking Benjamin Waterhouse, who was spending the summer at the Bagni, and whom she knew to be a frugal man, to take charge of Maso during her absence. Maso, who under other circumstances would have fought the idea of a tutor with all his strength, now yielded without a word. And then the mother, unwillingly and in a flood of tears, departed. She went by slow stages to Aix-les-Bains; even her first letter, however, much more the later ones, exhaled from each line her pleasure in the cooler air and in her returning health. She sent to Maso, after a while, a colored photograph of herself, taken on the shore of Lake Bourget, and the picture was to the lonely boy the most precious thing he had ever possessed; for it showed that the alarming languor had gone; she was no longer thin and wan. He carried the photograph with him, and when he was alone he took it out. For he was suffering from the deepest pangs of homesickness. He was homesick for his mother, for his mother's room (the only home he had ever known), with all its attractions and indulgences.

Now Maso was left alone, not only schoolless but tutorless. When the carriage bearing the biographer of Columbus had disappeared down the road leading to Lucca, the boy went back to the porter, who, wearing, his stiff official cap adorned with the name of the hotel, stood airing his corpulent person in the doorway. "Say, Gregorio, I'll take those letters to the post-office if you like; I'm going right by there."

Gregorio liked Maso; all Italian servants liked the boy and his clever dog. In addition, the sunshine was hot, and Gregorio was not fond of pedestrian exercise; so he gave the letters to Maso willingly enough. Maso went briskly to the post-office. Here he put two of the letters into the box, but the third, which bore his mother's address, remained hidden under his jacket. Returning to the hotel, he went up to his room, placed this letter in his trunk, and locked the trunk carefully; then, accompanied by Mr. Tiber, he went off for a walk. His thoughts ran something as follows: "'Tany rate, mother sha'n't know; *that's* settled; I ain't going to let her come back here and get sick again; no, sir! She's getting all well up there, and she's *got* to stay four whole months. There's no way she can

hear that old Longlegs" (this was his name for the historical Benjamin), "has gone, now that I've hooked his letter; the people she knows here at the Bagni never write; besides, they don't know where she's staying, and I won't let 'em know. If they see me here alone they'll suppose Longlegs has arranged it. I've got to tell lies some; I've got to pretend, when I write to her, that Longlegs has sprained his wrist or his leg or something, and that's why he can't write himself. I've got to be awful careful about what I put in my letters, so that they'll sound all right; but I guess I can do it bully. And I'll spend mighty little (only I'm going to have ices); I'll quit the hotel, and go back to that house where we stayed before the money came."

The fifty francs carried the two through a good many days. Mr. Tiber, indeed, knew no change, for he had his coroneted bed, and the same fare was provided for him daily—a small piece of meat, plenty of hot macaroni, followed by a bit of cake and several lumps of sugar. When there were but eight francs left, Maso went to Pisa. Mr. Waterhouse, who was very careful about money affairs, had paid all his pupil's bills up to the date of his own departure, and had then sent the

remainder of the money which Mrs. Roscoe had left with him for the summer to her bankers at Pisa. Maso, as a precaution, carried with him the unmailed letter which contained the receipt for this sum. But he hoped that he should not be obliged to open the letter; he thought that they would give him a little money without that, as they knew him well. When he reached Pisa he found that the bank had closed its doors. It had failed.

Apparently it was a bad failure. Nobody (he inquired here and there) gave him a hopeful word. At the English bookseller's an assistant whom he knew said: "Even if something is recovered after a while, I am sure that nothing will be paid out for a long time yet. They have always been shaky; in my opinion, they are rascals."

Maso went back to the Bagni. In the bewilderment of his thoughts there was but one clear idea: "'Tany rate, mother *sha'n't* know; she's got to stay away four whole months; the doctor said so."

IV

After a day of thought, Maso decided that he would leave the Bagni and go

down to Pisa, and stay at Casa Corti. Madame Corti would not be there (she spent her summers at Sorrento), and officially the pension was closed; but Giulio would let him remain, knowing that his mother would pay for it when she returned; he had even a vision of the very room at the top of the house where Giulio would probably put him — a brick-floored cell next to the linen-room, adorned with an ancient shrine, and pervaded by the odor of freshly ironed towels. It would be no end of a lark to spend the summer in Pisa. Luigi would be there. And the puppet-shows. And perhaps Giulio would take him up on Sundays to the house on the hillside, where his wife and children lived; he had taken him once, and Maso had always longed to go again. But when he reached Pisa with his dog and his trunk he found the Palazzo Rondinelli wearing the aspect of a deserted fortress; the immense outer doors were swung to and locked; there was no sign of life anywhere. It had not been closed for twenty years. It was the unexpected which had happened. Maso went round to the stone lane behind the palace to see Luigi. It was then that he learned that his friend had gone to live in Leghorn; he learned,

also, that the Casa Corti servants, having an opportunity to earn full wages at Abetone for two months, had been permitted by Madame Corti to accept this rare good fortune; the house, therefore, had been closed. Maso, thus adrift, was still confident that the summer was going to be "huge," a free banditlike existence, with many enjoyments; pictures of going swimming, and staying in as long as he liked, were in his mind; also the privilege of having his hair shaved close to his head, of eating melons at his pleasure, and of drinking lemonade in oceans from the gayly adorned jingling carts. Of course he should have to get something to do, as his money was almost gone. Still, it would not take much to support him, and there was going to be an exciting joy in independence, in living in "bachelor quarters." He found his bachelor quarters in the Street of the Lily, a narrow passage that went burrowing along between two continuous rows of high old houses. The Lily's pavement was slimy with immemorial filth, and, in spite of the heat, the damp atmosphere was like that of an ill-kept refrigerator. At the top of one of the houses he established himself, with Mr. Tiber, in a bare room which contained

not much more than a chair and a bed. Nevertheless, the first time he came out, locked his door, and descended the stairs with the key in his pocket, he felt like a man; and he carried himself like one, with a swagger. The room had one advantage—it contained a trap-door to the roof, and there was a ladder tied up to the high ceiling, its rope secured by a padlock; the boy soon contrived means (this must have been his Yankee blood) to get the ladder down when he chose; then at night he went up and cooled himself off on the roof, under the stars. There were two broken statues there—for the old house had had its day of grandeur; he made a seat, or rather a bed, at their feet. Mr. Tiber was so unhappy down below that Maso invented a way to get him up also; he spread his jacket on the floor, made Mr. Tiber lie down upon it, and then fastening the sleeves together with a cord, he swung the jacket round his neck and ascended with his burden. Mr. Tiber enjoyed the roof very much.

Having established himself, selected his trattoria, and imbibed a good deal of lemonade as a beginning, the occupant of the bachelor quarters visited the business streets of Pisa in search of employ-

ment. But it was the dullest season in a place always dull, and no one wished for a new boy. At the Anglo-American Agency the clerk, languid from the heat, motioned him away without a word; at the Forwarding and Commission Office no one looked at him or spoke to him; so it was everywhere. His friend the bookseller's assistant had gone for the summer to the branch establishment at Como.

Mrs. Roscoe, who detested Pisa, had established no relations there save at the confectioner's and at the bank. But the bank continued closed, and the confectioner objected to boys of thirteen as helpers. In this emergency Maso wrote to Luigi, asking if there was any hope of a place in Leghorn.

"There is sure to be a demand at the large establishments for a talented North American," Luigi had answered, with confidence.

But Maso went up and down the streets of Leghorn in vain; the large establishments demanded nothing.

"Say, Maso, couldn't you *look* a little different?" suggested Luigi, anxiously, as they came out of an office, where he had overheard the epithet "sullen-faced" applied to his American friend.

The two boys spoke Italian; Luigi knew no English.

"Why, I look as I'm made. Everybody looks as they're made, dòn't they?" said Maso, surprised.

"Ah, but expression is a beautiful thing—a sympathetic countenance," said Luigi, waving his hand. "Now you—you might smile more. Promise me to try a smile at the next place where we go in to ask."

At three o'clock Maso appeared at Luigi's shop. Luigi was dusting goblets. "Well?" he said, inquiringly.

Maso shook his head.

"Didn't you smile?"

"Yes, I did it as I took off my hat. And every time they seemed so surprised."

"I've a new idea, Maso; behold it: the consul of your country!"

"Is there one in Leghorn?" asked Maso, vaguely.

"Of course there is; I have seen the sign many a time." And Luigi mentioned the street and the number.

The proprietor of the shop, who was packing a case of the slender Epiphany trumpets, now broke one by accident, and immediately scolded Luigi in a loud

voice; Maso was obliged to make a hasty departure.

The office of the representative of the United States government was indicated by a painted shield bearing the insignia of the republic, and a brass plate below, with the following notification: "Consolato degli Stati-Uniti d' America." The first word of this inscription rouses sometimes a vague thrill in the minds of homesick Americans in Italy coming to pay a visit to their flag and the eagle.

As it happened, the consul himself was there alone. Maso, upon entering, took off his hat and tried his smile, then he began: "If you please, I am trying to get a place—something to do. I thought perhaps, sir, that you might—"

He stopped, and in his embarrassment put the toe of his shoe into a hole in the matting, and moved it about industriously.

"Don't spoil my matting," said the consul. "You're a very young boy to be looking for a place."

"I'm going on fourteen."

"And of what nation are you?" demanded the consul, after another survey.

"Why, I'm American," said Maso, surprised.

"I shouldn't have taken you for one. What is your name?"

"Maso—I mean Thom-as Ross Coe," replied the boy, bringing out the syllables with something of an Italian pronunciation.

"Tummarse Errosco? Do you call that an American name?"

"I'll write it," said Maso, blushing. He wrote it in large letters on the edge of a newspaper that was near him.

"Thomas R. Coe," read the consul. "Coe is your name, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"You want something to do, eh? What do you want, and why do you come here for it?"

Maso told his story, or rather a tale which he had prepared on his way to the consulate. It was a confused narrative, because he did not wish to betray anything that could give a clew to his mother's address.

The consul asked questions. "A failure, eh? What failure?"

"It—it wasn't in Leghorn."

"And your mother will be back in September? Where is she at present?"

"She—she is north; she isn't very well, and—" But he could not think of

anything that he could safely add, so he stopped.

"We haven't any places for boys. Did you expect me to take you in here?"

"No, sir. I thought perhaps you'd recommend me."

"On general principles, I suppose, as an American, seeing that I don't know anything else about you. And you selected the Fourth as a nice good patriotic day for it?"

"The Fourth?"

"I suppose you know what day it is?"

"Yes, sir—Tuesday."

The consul looked at him, and saw that he spoke in good faith. "*You* an American boy? I guess not! You may go." And dipping his pen in the ink, he resumed his writing.

Maso, though disturbed and bewildered, held his ground. He certainly was an American boy. What could the man mean?

"I'm an American. True as you live, I am," said Maso, earnestly.

Something in his face made the consul relent a little. "Perhaps you've got some American blood hidden in you somewhere. But it must be pretty well thinned out not to know the Fourth of July! I suppose you've never heard

of the Declaration of Independence, either?"

A gleam of light now illumined the darkness of Maso's mind. "Oh, yes; I know now; in the History." He rallied. "The Indians took a *very* bloody part in it," he added, with confidence.

"Oh, they did, did they? Where were you brought up?"

"In Italy, most; a little in other places. I came abroad before I was two."

"I see—one of the expatriated class," said Maclean, contemptuously. He had a great contempt for Americans who leave their own country and reside abroad. The dialogue ended, after a little more talk, in his saying: "Well, you get me a note from your mother (I suppose you write to her?) telling me something more about you. Then I'll see what I can do." For the boy's story had been a very vague one.

As Maso, heavy-hearted, turned towards the door, Maclean suddenly felt sorry for him. He was such a little fellow, and somehow his back looked so tired. "See here, my son," he said, "here's something for the present. No use telling you to buy firecrackers with it, for they haven't got 'em here. But

you might buy rockets; can't look out of the window summer nights in this place without seeing a lonely rocket shooting up somewhere." He held out two francs.

Maso's face grew scarlet. "I'd rather not, unless I can work for it," he muttered. It was a new feeling to be taken for a beggar.

"You can work enough for that if you want to. There is a printed list on that desk, and a pile of circulars; you can direct them. Show me the first dozen, so that I can see if they'll pass."

Maso sat down at the desk. He put his hat in six different places before he could collect his wits and get to work. When he brought the dozen envelopes for inspection, Maclean said:

"You seem to know Eyetalian well, with all these Eyetalian names. *I* can't make head or tail of 'em. But as to handwriting, it's about the worst I ever saw."

"Yes, I know," answered Maso, ashamed. "I've never had regular lessons, 'cepting this summer, when—" He stopped; Mr. Waterhouse's name would be, perhaps, a clew. He finished the circulars; it took an hour and a half. The consul shook hands with him, the me-

chanical hand-shake of the public functionary. "You get me that note, and I'll see."

Maso went back to Pisa.

When he arrived at his door in the Street of the Lily, the wife of the cobbler who lived on the ground-floor handed him a letter which the postman had left. The sight of it made the boy's heart light; he forgot his weariness, and climbing the stairs quickly, he unlocked his door and entered his room, Mr. Tiber barking a joyous welcome. Mr. Tiber had been locked in all day; but he had had a walk in the early morning, and his solitude had been tempered by plenty of food on a plate, a bowl of fresh water, and a rubber ball to play with. Maso sat down, and, with the dog on his knees, tore open his letter. It was directed to him at Pisa, in a rough handwriting, but within there was a second envelope, enclosing a letter from his mother, which bore the address of the hotel at the Bagni di Lucca, where she supposed that her son was staying with his tutor. She wrote regularly, and she sent polite messages to Waterhouse, regretting so much that his severe sprain prevented him from writing to her in reply. Maso, in his answers, represented himself as the

most hopelessly stupid pupil old Longlegs had ever been cursed with; in the network of deception in which he was now involved he felt this somehow to be a relief. He had once heard an American boy call out to another who was slow in understanding something, "You're an old gumpy"; so he wrote, "Longlegs yels out every day your an old gumpy," which greatly astonished Mrs. Roscoe. The boy exerted every power he had to make his letters appear natural. But the task was so difficult that each missive read a good deal like a ball discharged from a cannon; there was always a singularly abrupt statement regarding the weather; and another about the food at the hotel; then followed two or three sentences about Longlegs; and he was her "affecshionate son Maso. P.S.—Mr. Tiber is very well." He sent these replies to the Bagni; here his friend the porter, taking off the outer envelope, which was directed to himself, put the letter within with the others to go to the post-office; in this way Maso's epistles bore the postmark, "Bagni di Lucca." For these services Maso had given his second-best suit of clothes, with shoes and hat, to the porter's young son, who had aspirations.

The present letter from Mrs. Roscoe was full of joyousness and jokes. But the great news was that she intended to make a tour in Switzerland in August, and as she missed her little boy too much to enjoy it without him, she had written urgently to America about money, and she hoped that before long (she had told them to cable) she could send for him to join her. Maso was wildly happy; to be with his mother again, and yet not to have her return to Italy before the important four months were over, that was perfect; he got up, opened his trunk, and refolded his best jacket and trousers with greater care, even before he finished the letter. For he wore now continuously his third-best suit, as the second-best had been left at the Bagni. At last, when he knew the letter by heart, he washed his face and hands, and, accompanied by Mr. Tiber, tail-wagging and expectant, went down to get supper at the trattoria near by.

The next day he tried Pisa again, searching for employment through street after street. His mother had written that she hoped to send for him early in August. It was now the 5th of July, so that there were only four or five weeks to provide for; and then there would be

his fare back to the Bagni. But his second quest was hardly more fortunate than the first. The only person who did not wave a forefinger in perspiring negative even before he had opened his lips was a desiccated youth, who, sitting in his shirt sleeves, with his feet up and a tumbler beside him, gave something of an American air (although Maso did not know that) to a frescoed apartment in which sewing-machines were offered for sale. This exile told him to add up a column of figures, to show what he could do. But when he saw that the boy was doing his counting with his fingers, he nodded him toward the door. "Better learn to play the flute," he suggested, sarcastically.

Maso was aware that accountants are not in the habit of running a scale with the fingers of their left hand on the edge of their desks, or of saying aloud, "six and three are nine," "seven and five are twelve," and "naught's naught." He had caught these methods from his mother, who always counted in that way. He clinched his fingers into his palm as he went down the stairs; he would never count with them again. But no one asked him to count, or to do anything else. In the afternoon he sought the

poorer streets; here he tried shop after shop. The atmosphere was like that of a vapor bath; he felt tired and dull. At last, late in the day, a cheese-seller gave him a hope of employment at the end of the week. The wages were very small; still, it was something; and, refreshed by the thought, he went home (as he called it), released Mr. Tiber, and, as the sun was now low, took him off for a walk. By hazard he turned toward the part of the town which is best known to travellers, that outlying quarter where the small cathedral, the circular baptistery, and the Leaning Tower keep each other company, folded in a protecting corner of the crenellated city wall. The Arno was flowing slowly, as if tired and hot, under its bridges; Pisa looked deserted; the pavements were scorching under the feet.

V

The cheese shop was blazing with the light of four flaring gas-burners; the floor had been watered a short time before, and this made the atmosphere reek more strongly than ever with the odors of the smoked fish and sausages, caviare

and oil, which, with the cheese, formed the principal part of the merchandise offered for sale. There was no current of air passing through from the open door, for the atmosphere outside was perfectly still. Tranquilly hovering mosquitoes were everywhere, but Maso did not mind these much; he objected more to the large black beetles that came noiselessly out at night; he hated the way they stood on the shelves as if staring at him, motionless save for the waving to and fro of their long antennæ. A boy came in to buy cheese. It was soft cheese; Maso weighed it, and put it upon a grape-leaf. "It just gets hotter and hotter!" he remarked, indignantly. The Italian lad did not seem to mind the heat much; he was buttery with perspiration from morning until night, but as he had known no other atmosphere than that of Pisa, he supposed that this was the normal summer condition of the entire world. It was the 27th of July.

On the last day of July, when Maso's every breath was accompanied by an anticipation of Switzerland, there had arrived a long disappointed letter from his mother; the hoped-for money had not come, and would not come: "Reuben John again!" The Swiss trip must be

given up, and now the question was, could Mr. Waterhouse keep him awhile longer? "Because if he cannot, I shall return to the Bagni next week." Maso, though choked with the disappointment, composed a letter in which he said that old Longlegs was delighted to keep him, and was sorry he could not write himself, but his arm continued stiff; "prob'-ly heel never be able to write agane," he added, darkly, so as to make an end, once for all, of that complicated subject. There was no need of her return, not the least; he and Mr. Tiber were well, "and having loads of fun"; and, besides, there was not a single empty room in the hotel or anywhere else, and would not be until the 6th of September; there had never been such a crowd at the Bagni before. He read over what he had written, and perceiving that he had given an impression of great gayety at the Italian watering-place, he added, "P.S. peple all cooks turists." (For Mrs. Roscoe was accustomed to declare that she hated these inoffensive travellers.) Then he signed his name in the usual way: "your affecshionate son, Maso." He never could help blotting when he wrote his name—probably because he was trying to write particular-

ly well. Mrs. Roscoe once said that it was always either blot "so," or "Ma" blot; this time it was "Ma" blot.

This letter despatched, the boy's steadiness broke down. He did not go back to the cheese-seller's shop; he lived upon the money he had earned, and when that was gone he sold his clothes, keeping only those he wore and his best suit, with a change of underclothing. Next he sold his trunk; then his school-books, though they brought but a few centimes. The old fairy-book he kept; he read it during the hot noon-times, lying on the floor, with Mr. Tiber by his side. The rest of the day he devoted to those pleasures of which he had dreamed. He went swimming, and stayed in for hours; and he made Mr. Tiber swim. He indulged himself as regarded melons; he went to the puppet-show accompanied by Tiber; he had had his hair cut so closely that it was hardly more than yellow down; and he swaggered about the town in the evening smoking cigarettes. After three weeks of this vagabond existence he went back to the cheese-seller, offering to work for half wages. His idea was to earn money enough for his fare to the Bagni, and also to pay for the washing of his few

clothes, so that he might be in respectable condition to meet his mother on the 6th of September; for on the 6th the four months would be up, and she could safely return. This was his constant thought. Of late he had spoken of the 6th in his letters, and she had agreed to it, so there was no doubt of her coming. To-day, August 27, he had been at work for a week at the cheese-seller's, and the beetles were blacker and more crafty than ever.

It was Saturday night, and the shop was kept open late; but at last he was released, and went home. The cobbler's wife handed him his letter, and he stopped to read it by the light of her strongly smelling petroleum lamp. For he had only a short end of a candle upstairs; and, besides, he could not wait, he was so sure that he should find, within, the magic words, "I shall come by the train that reaches Lucca at—" and then a fixed date and hour written down in actual figures on the page.

The letter announced that his mother had put off her return for three weeks: she was going to Paris. "As you are having such a wonderfully good time at the Bagni this summer, you won't mind this short delay. If by any chance Mr.

Waterhouse cannot keep you so long, let him telegraph me. No telegram will mean that he can." She spoke of the things she should bring to him from Paris, and the letter closed with the sentence, "I am so glad I have thought of this beautiful idea before settling down again in that deadly Casa Corti for the winter." (But the idea had a human shape: Violet Roscoe's ideas were often personified; they took the form of agreeable men.)

"Evil news? Tell me not so!" said the cobbler's wife, who had noticed the boy's face as he read.

"Pooh! no," answered Maso, stoutly. He put the letter into his pocket and went up to his room. As he unlocked his door, there was not the usual joyful rush of Mr. Tiber against his legs; the silence was undisturbed. He struck a match on the wall and lighted his candle end. There, in the corner, on his little red coverlid, lay Mr. Tiber, asleep. Then, as the candle burned more brightly, it could be seen that it was not sleep. There was food on the tin plate and water in the bowl; he had not needed anything. There was no sign of suffering in the attitude, or on the little black face with its closed eyes (to Maso that

face had always been as clearly intelligible as a human countenance); the appearance was as if the dog had sought his own corner and his coverlid, and had laid himself down to die very peacefully without a pain or a struggle.

The candle end had long burned itself out, and the boy still lay on the floor with his arm round his pet. It seemed to him that his heart would break. "Mr. Tiber, dear little Tiber, my own little doggie—dying here all alone!—kinnin little chellow!" Thus he sobbed and sobbed until he was worn out. Towards dawn came the thought of what must follow. But no; Mr. Tiber should not be taken away and thrown into some horrible place! If he wished to prevent it, however, he must be very quick. He had one of the large colored handkerchiefs which Italians use instead of baskets; as the dawn grew brighter he spread it out, laid his pet carefully in the centre, and knotted the corners together tightly; then, after bathing his face, to conceal as much as possible the traces of his tears, he stole down the stairs, and passing through the town, carrying his burden in the native fashion, he took a road which led toward the hills.

It was a long walk. The little body

which had been so light in life weighed now like lead; but it might have been twice as heavy, he would not have been conscious of it. He reached the place at last, the house where Giulio's wife lived, with her five children, near one of the hillside villages, which, as seen from Pisa, shine like white spots on the verdure. Paola came out from her dark dwelling, and listened to his brief explanation with wonder. To take so much trouble for a dog! But she was a mild creature, her ample form cowlike, her eyes cowlike also, and therefore beautiful; she accompanied him, and she kept the curious crowding children in some kind of order while the boy, with her spade, dug a grave in the corner of a field which she pointed out. Maso dug and dug in the heat. He was so afraid of the peasant cupidity that he did not dare to leave the dog wrapped in the cotton handkerchief, lest the poor little tomb should be rifled to obtain it; he gave it, therefore, to one of the children, and gathering fresh leaves, he made a bed of them at the bottom of the hole; then leaning down, he laid his pet tenderly on the green, and covered him thickly with more foliage, the softest he could find. When the last trace of the little

black head had disappeared he took up the spade, and with eyes freshly wet again in spite of his efforts to prevent it, he filled up the grave as quickly as he could, levelling the ground smoothly above it. He had made his excavation very deep, in order that no one should meddle with the place later: it would be too much trouble.

It was now nearly noon. He gave Paola three francs, which was half of all he possessed. Then, with one quick glance towards the corner of the field, he started on his long walk back to Pisa.

VI

"Do you know where you'll end, Roberta? You'll end with us," said Mrs. Harrowby.

"With you?"

"Yes; in the Church. You've tried everything, beginning with geology and ending with music (I can't help laughing at the last; you never had any ear), and you have found no satisfaction. You are the very kind to come to us; they always do."

The speaker, an American who lived in Naples, had entered the Roman Cath-

olic Church ten years before; in Boston she had been a Unitarian. It was the 10th of September, and she was staying for a day in Pisa on her way southward; she had encountered Miss Spring by chance in the piazza of Santa Caterina at sunset, and the two had had a long talk with the familiarity which an acquaintance in childhood carries with it, though years of total separation may have intervened.

"There is one other alternative," answered Miss Spring; "it was suggested by a pretty little woman who used to be here. She advised me to try crystal scent-bottles and dissipation." This being a joke, Miss Spring had intended to smile; but at this instant her attention was attracted by something on the other side of the street, and her face remained serious.

"Crystal scent-bottles? Dissipation? Mercy!" exclaimed Mrs. Harrowby. "What *do* you mean?"

But her companion had gone; she was hurrying across the street. "It isn't possible, Maso, that this is *you!*" She spoke to a ragged, sick-looking boy.

Two hours after her question Maso was in bed in the Palazzo Rondinelli. Madame Corti never came back till Oc-

tober, and the *pension* was not open, but the servants were there. The housekeeper went through the form of making protest: "The signora has always such great alarm about fever."

"You will refer Madame Corti to me; I will pay for her alarm," answered Roberta, marching past her to direct the driver of the carriage, who was assisting Maso up the stairs. "It's not infectious fever. Only malarial." Roberta was something of a doctor herself. She superintended in person the opening of a large cool room on the second floor, the making of the bed, then the installation of Maso between linen sheets. The servants were all fond of the boy; in addition, Madame Corti was in Sorrento, and Miss Spring's francs were here. Her francs were few, but she spent them for Maso as generously as though they had been many.

The boy, as soon as he was in bed, whispered to Giulio, "Pencil; paper." Then, when Miss Spring had left the room, he scrawled on the page, Giulio holding a book under it, "My dog is ded," and signed his name. He told Giulio to give this to her when she came in; then, as he heard her step, he quickly closed his eyes,

Miss Spring read, and understood. "He was afraid I should ask. And he could not speak of it. He remembers, poor little fellow, that I did not care for the dog."

Maso had refused to tell her where his mother was. "She's coming, on the 22d, to the Bagni di Lucca"; this was all he would say. The next morning at daylight she left him with the nurse (for she had sent immediately for Dr. Prior and for one of the best nurses in Pisa), and driving to the Street of the Lily, she ascended the unclean stairs, with her skirts held high and her glasses on, to the room at the top of the house. Maso had himself gathered his few possessions together after his meeting with her in the piazza of Santa Caterina, but he had not had the strength to carry them down to the lower door. Miss Spring took the two parcels, which were tied up in newspapers, and after looking about to see that there was nothing left, she descended in the same gingerly way, and reentered the carriage which was waiting at the door, its wheels grazing the opposite house. "Yes, he is ill; malarial fever. But we hope he will recover," she said to the cobbler's wife, who inquired with grief and affection, and a very dirty face,

To find Mrs. Roscoe's address, so that she could telegraph to her, Miss Spring was obliged to look through Maso's parcels. She could not ask his permission, for he recognized no one now; his mind wandered. One of the bundles contained the best suit, still carefully saved for his mother's arrival. The other held his few treasures: his mother's letters, with paper and envelopes for his own replies; the old fairy-book; and Mr. Tiber's blanket, coverlid, and little collar, wrapped in a clean handkerchief. The latest letter gave the Paris address.

"My dear little boy! If I could only have known!" moaned Violet Roscoe, sitting on the edge of the bed with her child in her arms. She had just arrived; her gloves were still on. "Oh, Maso, why didn't you tell me?"

Maso's face, gaunt and brown, lay on her shoulder; his eyes were strange, but he knew her. "You mustn't get sick again, mother," he murmured, anxiously, the fixed idea of the summer asserting itself. Then a wider recollection dawned. "Oh, mother," he whispered with his dry lips, "Mr. Tiber's dead. Little Tiber!"

A month later Mr. Reuben J. Coe, of Coesville, New Hampshire, said to his brother David: "That foolish wife of Tom's is coming home at last. In spite of every effort on my part, she has made ducks and drakes of almost all her money."

"Is that why she is coming back?"

"No; thinks it will be better for the boy. But I'm afraid it's too late for that."

Zan Zoo

BY GEORGE HEATH

THERE was a soft burring sound. You would have noticed it if you had been there, and you would very much have wondered what it was. Again, again, and again—so soft, so gentle, so entreating. Now you would surely know it came from behind the hedge of cacti, and if you walked around to the other side you would see little Zan Zoo lying on her stomach, her feet conveniently resting on her back. Zan Zoo is talking to the turtle-doves. She has tied a string to a tiny foot on each dove to make sure they will not get beyond conversational distance. Zan Zoo is thinking "what very little feet the doves have" as they walk about with their funny short steps. Then she remembers with satisfaction her own wonderful feet. She carefully ties the strings to her thumb, sits upright, and crosses her feet into her lap. There is nothing

in the world, Zan thinks, so beautiful as her feet. Doesn't every one speak of them? Don't all the boys say, "Let's see your feet, Zan," when they catch her sitting on them? Zan's feet are not small; they are not white; they are not well shaped. Why does she look at them with that wide grin of perfect satisfaction? She fairly chuckles over them. Now she counts her toes—one, two, three, four, five, six. It is quite true—six on each foot.

The doves come close to her. There is the pretty liquid note once more. "What do you say to the doves?" I ask. "They know," is the brief answer; and indeed they seem to, for in a moment they are on her shoulders, daintily arranging their iridescent finery, and the look of intelligence in Zan's eyes tells that it is in response to her request.

She stands up, the birds still on her shoulders. It is all strange and curious to me—the handsome little Caffre girl making the doves obey her so prettily; the long narrow garden, with its cactus hedge, its clump of bamboos, the fig-trees here and there, and farther on the grove of bananas, and over all the deep blue sky, bluer than anything I had ever dreamed of before; and the high huts on

every side, with strange lights and shadows now brightening, now darkening them. "How beautiful!" I exclaim. Zan looks at her feet, and says "Yes."

When I returned to the farm-house I made inquiries concerning my new acquaintance. It seems that she belonged on the farm, and had been deserted by both father and mother. I was told that she was extremely proud of her numerous toes, that she assumed great airs on account of them, and considered herself wholly exempt from the ordinary duties that fell to the colored children about the place. Her mistress informed me also that the child was a terrible nuisance, adding, expressively: "I intend to break her in soon. The young baboon will find there are other things to do than crooning over doves and taming dirty toads."

I had gone beyond the tropics for my health, but until now I had been travelling so constantly that I had obtained little benefit from the climate. The luxurious spot into which I at length settled for a period of several months was all that my body and soul most desired. This was "the Beers' farm," where I encountered Zan Zoo on the day of my arrival. For the first week I did noth-

ing but eat my meals, crawl into the garden, loll in my steamer-chair, and bask in the sun.

I thought of Zan occasionally, and wondered that I had not seen her again. One morning, when I had become strong enough, I went to the river for my bath. As I came near the Ron I heard a scream, followed by a wail of despair. In an instant I came upon Zan Zoo, hands clinched and face fiery. It seems that for several months a large yellow-bellied toad, well adorned with warts, had taken up his nightly habitation in Zan Zoo's apartment, not finding it too regal for his plebeian taste. Now Zan had a very tender heart for all living creatures, men and women excepted. These she looked upon as a race of cruel giants expressly created to multiply the grievances of innocent folk like herself and the doves. She therefore met the friendly approaches of the toad in the warmest manner.

She called him familiarly "Hopper" when they were alone, but in the presence of others invariably prefixed the proper title—Mr. The day previous had witnessed one of Zan's fasts. She awoke in the morning cross in proportion to the emptiness of her stomach. Jacob, a

colored boy whom she detested, came along while she was sitting in the doorway talking to Hopper. Jacob was enough Hottentot to compel a growth of hair in tufts interspersed with bare patches over his head. Zan never saw Jacob without a desire arising within her to "sass him."

"Ja-cob, Ja-cob," she sang out with aggravating inflection, making the first syllable abnormally long, and cutting the latter short with a click which she knew to be particularly annoying—"Ja-cob, why don't you sow seed in your patches?"

Jacob made no reply, but sauntered a little nearer, picking up a stick as he came.

This move was received with a contemptuous snort from Zan Zoo. "Ach, you turnip-head! You think I am afraid of you?" and she displayed her choicest reserves in a series of diabolical faces intended to strike terror to the cowardly heart of Jacob.

The stick made a twirl, but it did not fall on Zan. 'Twas aimed at poor Hopper, who sat there with blinking eyes and palpitating throat, watching the altercation. One dexterous turn following the blow landed the unfortunate Hopper some yards distant. Then came the

scream I had heard. Zan made a rush to the rescue. Her anger was swallowed up in her fears for the injury done to her pet.

"It's Hopper! it's Hopper!" she cried. "Don't touch him—please, don't!" and she cowered over the half-dead reptile.

It was too delightful to Jacob to find his tormentor so completely and unexpectedly in his power. He flourished his stick threateningly. She was crying piteously now, and begging.

"He never hurt you. He couldn't hurt you—Hopper couldn't. He liked me; he liked me so, he always came. I won't ever make faces at you again—truly I won't."

The stick came down, but it fell on Zan's hands, held protectingly over the gasping Hopper.

"You wicked boy! you're a coward—a coward! You wouldn't dare touch him, only he can't do anything. The snakes will bite you now." And she blazed her great eyes wrathfully upon him as though she had a legion of serpents ready to do her bidding. I came upon them in time to send Jacob skulking about his work, and to save Hopper from his death agonies for the time being.

Though I never had been aware of any

ardent personal attachment myself for toads previously to this event, my heart went out at once toward Mr. H. and his brave little defender. I comforted her as well as I might—suggesting that Mr. H. was not of an overly sensitive organization, and that if we put him in the ground for a season to mend himself he would come out all right. But she sternly refused to have him "buried alive," as she called it. She wrapped him up in a bit of her ragged dress and bore him off. I never learned the exact course of treatment he underwent; doubtless it was to his own satisfaction, for I observed him blinking away by Zan's steps not more than a week later, apparently in his normal condition. I found afterward that this incident had advanced me considerably in Zan's good graces. She turned up somewhere in my wandering nearly every day, till at length the hours became few when she was not by my side or dogging my footsteps or bounding before me over the veld. She took me to all of her favorite haunts—the mount, the waterfall, the cave, and most of all to the field below the garden. Zan and they are curiously interwoven in my memory. There is a rush of vivid coloring before my eyes—intense impressions,

like those made by a flash of lightning —then there emerges out of the scene brought before me the dark childish face of Zan, with intent big eyes turning from me to her darling resorts and back to me again, as if to see whether she had desecrated the spot by bringing me there. I have not even to close my eyes to see the most trifling objects that surrounded us. At every step there is a little change; the change becomes greater, till at last— But I am thinking now of the time she first took me up the mount. Our way lies through the dusty oak-shaded street, close bordered by the stoops of the low thatched houses. People are coming out to enjoy the cool breeze which springs up at the close of a long hot day. A beautiful Malay in purple gown and yellow turban passes us, carrying a basket on her head. She is proud of her beauty, of her full stiff skirts, and of the way she carries her head. A little farther, and we meet a line of bullocks. There are twenty of them. They are drawing a little wagon loaded with wood. A very small Caffre boy runs before the cattle, and attends their steps. A white man sits on the load, and flourishes a long whip. Sometimes it hits the cattle and sometimes the boy. The air is drowsy

still, in spite of the freshening breeze. It seems to lull your consciousness as an individual, and you exist only as a part of a picture. It is made up of the narrow red street, the dusty oaks, the wide stoops, the thatched houses, the big-horned cattle, the smart Malay. We turn from the street and go up the western slope. We restrain all desire to look back, till we have climbed a fourth of the steep ascent. It is now that we wholly lose sight of our old-time companion self. He heaves one sigh and departs. A new self takes his place. His vision is clearer, his hearing finer, than his who has left. But that is not all; he possesses a sixth sense, which perceives that subtle something in nature speaking plainer than words to those who have ears to hear.

At first, as we look, there is a blank moment of receptivity. Then we gradually grasp the details here and there in the wide sweep of earth lying before us. We see that the huts to the south are very distant, so that their outlines are softly traced in the sky. We notice the town and river away beneath us.

We feel the fresh strong breeze coming in from the sea. We realize that the blue has gone from the air. The mountains

are quivering with strange lights and colors — purple, amethyst, ruby. They take curious shapes against the sky. Range upon range appears delicately outlined, one behind another, one springing out of another—a wilderness of varying curves. Zan feels my interest, and does not speak for a long time; then she asks,

"Is it not good to be here?"

I tell her that it is "very good," and she continues,

"You don't know much about it, do you—what made it, and all that?"

I meekly respond, "I supposed I did," not knowing whether she purposed testing my knowledge of the Bible or zoology.

She looked at me a moment with a challenging expression before beginning her examination: "Do you know about that big giant over there lying on his back? Do you know who killed him, and why he was turned to stone? Do you know why those three big elephants on the top of Klipperstein can't move? Ach! I think you could say if you did." And she considered my countenace with the air of having discovered a base pretender.

I hastily acknowledged my utter igno-

rance, and begged enlightenment with such humility that she not only was mollified, but regaled me with tales on our homeward walk which, it was easy to see, increased in marvel on every delivery.

One day I came into the garden, and found the mountains near and far transformed. They simply outlined an expanse of purest blue, varying from the deepest dye of those close at hand to the blue-white of those in the distance. The sky, as usual, was an unbroken expanse of blue, paling toward the horizon,—blue, blue, everything seemed heaven-bound with it. Suddenly my eye was attracted to a patch of liveliest green a few feet from me. Pretty, I thought, and looked again toward the mountains. But somehow that green intruded once more. This time I noticed 'twas a setting for a host of diamonds daintily suspended before the gaze of the admiring sun. They trembled and sparkled and turned themselves as though impelled by a feminine vanity. Again I turned away; but now my mind was so filled with green that it could not take in blue. I lay back in my chair, and gave myself up to the charm of the little patch before me. I found that some of the diamonds were rainbow-encircled, others burned with a steady

flame like a candle, and others were veritable twinkling stars. More than this, I learned that all loved the fair green blades that held them, and many more secrets which I will not reveal. Zan was standing by my side.

"Isn't it blue?" she asks.

"Yes; but then there is the green," I say.

"But the green is always, and the blue isn't," she replies, and adds; "I like the green to lie on and the blue to look into. How close it comes to-day, the blue! One has to look so far mostly."

"I have been learning secrets, Zan. I don't think you can find them out," I suggest, teasingly. Zan doesn't hear me.

"It is most time," she says, presently.

"Time for what?" I ask.

"I thought you knew," she says. "If you keep still, you will see."

In a few minutes one little hand was pulling my trousers, and the other was pointing to a bit of dirt, a miniature volcano, only in place of the fire and smoke came a mole's snout, then the rest of Mr. Mole; just an instant, and he was under his volcano again. Zan hopped about like mad.

"Did you not see?" she says. "Ach, it was grand! Did you see him take it?

Now I will tell you. I have found out to know when he will come out, and I make a nice dinner of things that he likes. Ach! isn't it fine that he takes?"

By this time Zan and I were fast friends, and it was with regret that I left the odd little African when I took my leave of the Beers to make a trip up country, and to visit many English friends whose hospitality I had not felt equal to accepting when I arrived at the colony. My trip was a pleasant one, and all my invitations had been gratefully acknowledged in person except one from a young English doctor. This I had reserved till the last, as it was only a few miles from the Beers' farm, and was a convenient point at which to end my South African sojourn; but before going there I intended spending a few days with the Beers again, partly out of courtesy to them, and partly, I must acknowledge, from a lingering inclination to take another walk with my dark little protégée.

Several months had passed since I was at the Beers', and as I approached I noted the changes of season about the place, let my eyes follow the familiar line of the cactus hedge, saw a dove or

two wheeling in the air, and thought with a smile of Zan.

The day I arrived I did not see Zan, and for some reason I could not bring myself to ask after her. Things did not seem the same as when I left. 'Twas not easy to talk. They all appeared to be thinking of something in which I had no part. Mrs. Beer was particularly silent, and when I proposed going the next day, she made no objection. When I took my leave, Mr. Beer muttered some unintelligible words, from which I gathered the idea that they were in trouble. I learned all about it afterward from my English friend the doctor, and later still from Zan herself.

It all came out of the difficulty of getting Zan "broken in." It seems that when the day came on which she was to begin work in the house, she was found to be missing. Jacob was sent to hunt her up. He made a pleasant morning of it sitting by the river-bank, or occasionally skirmishing among the fruit-trees; but toward noon he presented himself at the kitchen door with a dolorous countenance, and the information that Zan must "hev tuk to the mountings, for there wasn't hide nor hair of her in the valley."

In the mean time she had been enjoying life even more than Jacob. A blue, blue sky; a field of tasselled mealies; a bright green sugar-bird with two long tail feathers; a dirty, dirty Caffre girl in a dirty, dirty apron — and you see Zan and all her surroundings. At first she was angry and defiant, and squatted down among the mealie stalks with a big scowl and wrathful eyes. "Go into the kitchen and work?" Indeed she would not. They might give her something outdoors to do. They just wanted to plague her, she knew. She could see quite plain. But that sort of thing couldn't last long. There was no one there to be angry with. Before long she had forgotten that she was wanted in the house, and was lying flat on her back looking up into the blue. Then came the green sugar-bird, flying among the yellow stalks.

She lay still, very still. Perhaps he would come to her this time; he had been so near it once. She wanted to say "Ssssweet-je" to him, but she knew that vexed him, and she feared he might fly away if she did. So she never moved or made a sound, not the least bit. "Sweetje" was right over her head now, and Zan's great black eyes were wide open with

hope and expectation. He balanced himself for an instant on a stalk, gracefully drooped his long feathers, raised his wings, and sailed away.

But, love and laughter! what happiness! "Sss-weet-je, heartje-sweetje," called the little Caffre girl. For did he not make a superb sweep downward, and didn't those long drooping feathers brush her very face?

Even he — the grand, the gloriously beautiful one, so proud, so dainty, so bewitching, he stoops and caresses her. She feels it all, and she is brimful of joy. She rollicks around in high glee for a long time. If Jacob had been very diligent in his search, 'twould have been easy to find her then; but Jacob is in the plantain-bush, with his teeth in the middle of a banana, and all other sights and sounds were shut out in the delight of his own eating. Zan makes a charming plan in her wise little head. She knows where the sugar flowers grow that sweetje likes so well to run his bill in and get the syrup from. They are a long way off; Zan never thinks of that. When night comes, Zan is just crawling home, with her arms full of sugar-bush flowers.

The next morning she is up and away before any one has time to call her. She

takes the flowers along with her. One could have seen about sunrise a thin bit of blue smoke coming up from a corner of the mealie field. 'Twas where Zan was roasting the ears of corn for her breakfast. A few hours later she was lying in the same place as yesterday. She was nearly covered with the dewy sugar blossoms. There were anxious eyes and a palpitating heart under those branches.

"Will he come, and will he stay?" she is thinking. One hour, two hours, three hours, go by. The patient little waiter is just beginning to be a little bit discouraged, is beginning to fear the flowers will wilt, when whir, whir, and settling himself in the midst of them is Mr. Greencoat, as gay and cavalier as yesterday. He runs his slender beak daintily into the flower that lies in Zan's very hand. Now he is on her head, now her breast. Her heart is full. It is the happiest moment of her life. A quick report cuts the still air. It is from a whip that falls on child and flowers. It sends the pretty bird away in a long flight of terror. Zan springs to her feet without a sound. Her eyes are blazing. The little lithe figure quivers. Before her stands the loutish form of Duro.

"Ach, you Caffre cur! I've tracked you at last," he says, in his thick tones.

Zan looks down, and plainly sees the print of her six-toed feet in the dew-wet earth.

Poor Zan's short-lived rapture had to be paid for sadly enough. She was made to work, and the making was a sorry process for both child and mistress. Zan nursed her wrath, sulked, and usually contrived to occasion more trouble during the day than she rendered assistance. The mistress grew more determined. No black girl should defy her. Whippings became frequent, and at every whipping Zan grew sulkier and the mistress angrier.

The child was kept in the house from the first stirring in the morning till the evening work was over; not so much because her services were useful as to "break her in." And the angry little girl, sore and tired, would lie awake and cry to think of her neglected doves, of Hopper, of the sugar-bird whose love was so nearly within her reach. It seemed so dreadful that they should be thinking she did not care for them any more. Once the thought came to her, "Perhaps they are forgetting me"; then the little

hands clasped over the quivering mouth to keep back the sobs.

A day came when she could endure the suspense no longer. She slipped off her perch in the kitchen (where she was paring fruit) the first moment she was left alone, and scurried down behind the cactus hedge. She squatted there, silently listening for a few minutes, then scooted for the grove of firs. Oh, how nice it was! What should she visit first? She would like a look at "Spring-bokie," but she was sure the boys would feed him, and be good to him too; he was such a darling, they could not help it. And the doves? Yes, she must see the doves. But Hopper? Nobody liked Hopper. She would see to him first. He did get so lonely. He never would have come to her in the night—always in the night, when nobody was about—if he had not been very lonely. There he sits behind the row, catching flies in the most composed and natural manner. Zan's face is bright with delight. Hopper must appreciate it, for he stops in his fascinating pastime, gives two or three fine hops, does a good deal of swallowing and palpitating, and in all ways responds as well as a toad can do to Zan's demonstrations. She is quite satisfied with her welcome.

She picks him up and nestles him awhile, lays down a nice pile of crumbs out of the store she has been saving for the doves, pulls a few soft grasses and arranges a bed for him in a comfortable spot, then shakes hands with him and tears herself away. "Ooo-ooh, oo-ooh!" softly, musically, she calls. "Ooo-ooh, oo-ooh!" in the grove of firs. Ooo-ooh, oo-ooh!" among the vines. "Ooo-ooh!" under the bamboos. And now there is a gentle flutter of wings, a downward motion, and half a dozen doves are lighted on Zan Zoo—on her outstretched arms, on her shoulders, on her head. There is a deal of smiling, and talking, and cooing, and love-making, and some vanity and display, to show Zan how glad they are to see her, and how extremely nice they are looking. She reproves one here and there whose manners she thinks a little forward, but shows no great partiality to any one. Each gets a good word in turn.

Now comes the distribution of crumbs. She has a big supply. The excitement is great. Zan is very happy. Her friends have not forgotten her. She thinks she will be good now. Perhaps if she is very good, they won't mind her running away for a little bit every day. She leaves the

doves eating, and goes back to her work. Everything is as she left it. No one seems to have noticed her absence. How glad she is that she went! She quite makes up her mind to try it again. She is respectful and well-behaved all the afternoon.

Jacob says, "What you s'pose ails Zan that she don't prank it?" He winks knowingly to the cook, as if he alone could divine the hidden meaning of such unlooked-for virtue. Jacob is sent to pick figs for the supper table. He comes back with a long face and says, "No figs, missus, 'cept dese," and displays three imperfect ones. He looks at Zan, with a malicious gleam in his eyes, adding, "P'rhaps Zan thought she'd pick 'em."

Mistress Beer was not slow to follow up the idea. She had spent the afternoon in concocting a suitable plan for punishing Zan's absence from the kitchen. Now it appeared all unworthy of the enormities suggested by Jacob's intimation.

"Go inside," she said to Zan, in a tone that had a forbidding quaver to it. Then, to Jacob, "How do you know Zan took?"

"If missus 'll come with, I'll show," he answered, with alacrity.

Madame Beer returned, strong circumstantial evidence added to her previous

conviction. There were certainly traces of the superfluous toe in the indistinct footprints about the fig-trees. She went in to Zan. In the scene which followed, she must have been unconscious of the lengths to which she went. Her temper had mastered her. The child's wee bit of covering was removed; lash after lash fell on the tender quivering flesh. Once, Zan's clear voice rang out, "I didn't touch them figs;" but the denial seemed only to infuriate the outraged mistress. At last, when her strength was spent and her passion had ebbed, she saw Zan lying unconscious on the floor. The flesh on her back was in ridges; here and there the blood had come to the surface. In spite of the pallor in Zan's face, Mrs. Beer convinced herself that the child was pretending. She thought fit, however, to cover the child's back with the bit of apron again before she called Mr. Beer to get her out of the way. Zan was laid in the room of one of the house-servants, who was told that she could sleep somewhere else, as Zan was shut in there for a punishment. Mrs. Beer's subsequent conduct was the occasion of much hot discussion amongst her friends and enemies for some months. The doctor would hear to nothing but the worst

possible construction of the case. I cannot pretend to account for the apparently premeditated cruelty in that which follows, but I judge Mrs. B. as leniently as possible. Zan did not come to her senses. Now, whether Mrs. Beer was fearful that she might not revive by ordinary means, or whether she desired to obliterate the marks of her own self-forgetfulness on the child, or whether, as the doctor declared, she did it in wanton cruelty, to make the flesh more susceptible to another whipping, I do not know (I cannot believe it was the last); but whatever her motive, the course she pursued was wholly unfortunate for the credit due to humanity. She covered the girl's back with mustard poultices. Zan revived; but the irritant had accomplished its work so effectively that 'twas to an agony of torment. The room was hot, close, and filthy. She begged to go outdoors. "The bed makes my back burn," she said. She thought if she could lie on the cool earth and get a whiff of the cool air she would be quite well.

Mrs. Beer moved the whip slightly that she held in her hand and whenever she entered the door, and said, "Stay where you are."

Zan remained there the whole day.

When night came, she could not sleep. She went to the window and looked out. 'Twas clear and bright. The stars looked so friendly; the air was cool and enticing. She knew where there was a delicious spot to lie on. It wouldn't be very hard to get out of the window, and she could get back again before daylight. How lame the lithe active limbs were! She could hardly crawl through, and usually she would have done it with a bound. Once out, she forgot her pain in the delight of being free again. She managed to get to her favorite spot. There she lay looking up at the tender luminous stars looking down so kindly upon her. She smiled, and drew a long breath of satisfaction. She could hear a hop, hop, close by. A cool, such a cool, little body touched her. It must be Hopper. He kept close to her. How nicely the breeze cooled her burns! "The frogs are having a grand time," she thought, as their mad croaking came to her from a neighboring sloot. "How long it's been since I was by them! I hope the boys don't throw them with stones any more." Then she heard the frogs no longer. The breeze seemed to be closing her eyelids. Earth's loving arms nestled the forlorn little creature while she slept.

Dr. Clare, my English friend, told me that on one hot morning, on his way to a farm-house near the foot of the mountain, he saw a pretty Caffre child lying apparently unconscious by the roadside. On picking her up, he found that her bit of clothing stuck to her back as if glued. The flesh proved to be terribly lacerated. He took the little creature home and doctored her. When she began to recover he learned from her that she was called Zan Zoo, and belonged to the Beer's farm. He took the matter to the law courts. There he carried everything before him with a high hand. The Beers were forced to pay a fine of $2500 or see Mrs. Beer lodged in jail. The fine was paid. The doctor gave the money into my charge, to be used for the education of little Zan. Somehow it was generally understood by us all that Zan was my protégée, and would accompany me home.

Zan turned toward me in a sweetly dependent way. The wild little thing had never depended on any one before, but now the heart seemed to be gone out of life for her. She seemed to be very glad to go away with me, yet I could not arouse much interest in her over the new life we were to enter. The northern

lands, where the great world lived, the vast snow-fields, the green fields, the big ocean—these were all blank leaves to her. She looked at me with an expression that told of other thoughts—were they of her own dear dull veld, of the spring-bokie, of the doves, and Mr. Hopper?—but still she always said, "Yes, I want to go with."

The day before we set sail was Sunday. Zan spent it in the garden down by the river.

The air was pure and fresh; it turned the leaves of the tall powdered poplars this way and that, making a shimmer of silver and green; it fanned the cheek softly; it was cold and murmurous; it had blown over the distant firs, and came laden with the echoes of their slumberous melodies.

"Ah!" she thought, as she looked through the green oaks and pale poplars to the clear blue sky beyond, "if it will only speak to me; if it will only tell me something—something that I can always keep!"

There was a colony of finches that had hung their odd township of round nests gracefully and warily over the running stream on overhanging branches, making it practically inaccessible to enemies, and

the bright yellow creatures, in happy delight at their security, were twittering about with the prettiest ease and freedom. Besides, there was the coo of a pair of turtle-doves not far away, and now and then the laughing sweetness of what would have been a thrush in a northern clime; the river itself, declining over its stony bed, completed the harmony. No wonder that, with her senses assailed by this witching melody of birds, brook, and wind, and the vision of varying, charming colors of the opening springtime against the white-barred blue, there was intensified in her a longing for a glimpse of what was above and beyond and yet within it all. Her eyes were full of tears that had not force to fall. She quivered in trembling anxiety.

Zan remained curled up there on the bench till daylight was wholly gone. She came reluctantly when I went out to fetch her. I think she would have much preferred remaining there all night. When she came down the next morning, she was in perfect readiness for our journey. I was not in the least satisfied with the respectability of her appearance. She looked extremely proper in the dark blue gown and little round hat. The long

braid of straight black hair was all that it should be. The doctor was ecstatic, declaring she was as neat as wax, and as pretty as a picture.

"Neat and pretty!" Yes, one could hardly deny that; but Zan Zoo, the wild Caffre girl who had guided me to the waterfall, who whistled to the birds and talked with the mountains, she was not there. A wide-eyed, wondering, docile creature stood in her place, and looked timidly around the great prison of civilization she had entered. She seemed to me to be looking back with hungry longing to the wild freedom she had known.

It could not be helped. The great procession had swept her onward. The step backward could never be taken. But what would I not have given to have kept her as she was when I first knew her? Was she never again to have the sweet fellowship of her darling earth? Would the birds and the bees and the flowers disown her? Should I come to see her think of her clothes, and shrink from the earth that had loved her?

On shipboard Zan's great delight was to be taken to the forecastle, and there to stand for hours on the very point of the prow, one arm round the flag-staff, looking, with glowing eyes and brighten-

ing face, over the wide waste of waters. Her eyes would blaze when the prow dipped deep; and the old ringing laugh would come back to me above the roar, as we rose up again to the top of the wave. But her highest glee was when a big sea drenched us. After that she would be happy for a whole day. At first I was in terror lest she should fall from the precarious position she took with such assurance, and I would hold her clothing with a nervous grasp.

"Why do you hold?" she asked me one day, as we were making our way back to the deck.

"But if you should fall?" I said.

"I shouldn't mind; 'twouldn't be so bad." Then, tipping her head a little for reflection, "It must be nice down under the sea, and the roar is so good," with a gleaming smile.

"But do you think I would want to lose you?" I asked.

She did not answer except by an odd little stare that spoke of an incredulity still as to the possibility of any human being really caring for her. Mr. Hopper and the doves, she understood that well enough, that they would not want to lose her. But man or woman? It was hardly to be believed.

Another thing that she enjoyed was sitting in the stern of the ship, behind the wheel. There she would remain, with her head on the bulwarks, watching the long white path we left behind us, never knowing what was going on around her. And in the evening, when the fiery phosphorescence played along the wake, she would grow excited, and I could see that bright fancies were teeming through her brain, as in the days when we watched the colors on the mountains together. There were other things, too, that she enjoyed. The captain had a great liking for her, and gave her the full run of the ship. The boatswains would set the sailors singing, when they hoisted the sails, to please the child. Everybody had a pleasant word for Zan, and Zan soon came to have a dear little bit of a smile for everybody; farther than that she would not commit herself except in moments of great excitement, as when we sighted land, or a shoal of porpoises appeared, or a flying-fish was washed on deck.

As week after week went by I fancied Zan was pining. Her eyes looked bigger, and she did not seem to be ready and lithe as she used. By the time I had her home with me in New England the change was quite apparent. She liked to

keep close by me, was quiet and drooping. There was little of the eager, questioning, imaginative Zan left. I laid it to the change of climate, to the bare dreary autumn to which she was unused. I hoped that when winter was over and spring came, it would open a new life within her.

I was unpacking pictures put away in boxes previously to my travels. Zan was helping me with more animation about her than she had shown since our arrival. The great dark eyes in the wan face had such a pathetic look it gave me a guilty feeling to encounter them. The neat gown and smooth hair, to which she was now quite accustomed, only heightened the pathos. I longed to see the blazing eyes, the wicked little smile over the white teeth, the frowzy hair, the bare figure with its scant drapery of battered print. I would have given half my life, as I met that startled, hungry glance, to have heard again the liquid note with which she called her doves about her, or the wild "ss-weet-je" with which she teased the sugar-birds. I yearned to take her in my arms and lay her again on the wide-spreading veld, where she made friends with the hare, the mole, and the locust, or looked away and away into the

wonderful blue while pretty, untaught fancies possessed her being. Poor, sweet, wild Zan! The world had caught her in its great iron cage, and she could only cower at my side till she was set free again.

I put the different pictures against the chairs and tables as I took them out. Zan had a question or remark for each. One of Millet's, with a flock of sheep and two figures in the foreground, she commended positively.

"That is very good. It is Cours and Matilda. They went way round Black Cap for the sheep. That one big sheep I called 'Baas.' He got caught on the mimosa-bush the one day, and I got him off. He liked me, Baas did."

There was an exquisite copy in sepia of the "Upward Madonna," a Guido Reni. As I placed it on an easel, I felt Zan's little hand on mine.

"Is she Caffre?" she asked, very softly.

Earth's motherless little African! Did she feel a glow of hope and joy at the sight of those rich brown tints in the glorious heavenly face? I felt a big lump in my throat as I drew the drooping form of the once irrepressible Zan close to me and said:

"It is 'The Mother'—the mother of

the whole world, yours and mine too. Your own true mother, Zan."

Did she believe it literally, and in a different sense from what I meant? She asked no questions, but looked at it with a peculiar softness of expression.

"Yes," she said, after a little, in a tone of having come to a decision. Then, "There are none so beautiful?" in the old colloquial questioning way of our first acquaintance.

And I responded, "No, not one."

The child's eyes, which had not once turned from the Mother's face, slowly filled with tears. She drew away from me, and stood with folded hands directly before the picture. I watched her with intense interest. Had the Virgin's beauty aroused her strange bright fancy? Had it carried her back to her shadowy, ever-changing mountains, to her deep blue sky, to her sweeping veld, to her wild weird kloofs? Did all that was brightest and freest come back to her then? The time when she lay so close to the kindly earth and could understand every whisper, when her friends were many and loving, the cricket chirping her welcome, and the turtle-doves cooing her theirs, when the beautiful face of her own Caffre mother bent o'er her with one of its

rare loving looks? Or was it not just the impalpable spirit within that picture drawing one, bearing one upward, in such waves of passionate longing as I had felt looking upon it? Whatever, it had conquered the child, the divine upturned face in the glow of its warm brown tints. I could see the rising sob by the tremor of the little form. I quietly went away, and left the caged Caffre bird with "The Mother."

Day after day the snow had been falling slowly but steadily, and during that time Zan had scarcely left the window. She had been waiting very impatiently for it, had conjured up weird pictures of it in her imagination, this snow she had never seen, but was told made the north so different from her beautiful south.

She had watched the earth grow hard and cold, had fallen once and bruised herself on a ragged bit of frozen ground, and I saw a hurt look in her eyes, and noticed that she held the hand behind her as she came toward me.

"Did you hurt yourself?" I asked. "The ground is so hard now, you must be careful."

Then I knew it was not the pain of her hand that gave her the look, but a deeper

sense of injury that she would not confess, for she answered,

"I guess 'twas just a stone."

The child had grown so near to me that I could interpret her feelings frequently, half by intuition, and half by little signs that I had learned to know the hidden meanings of. I wonder if it seems a trifle to others, this little incident that has so much pathos in it to me! Cannot you put yourself in this ignorant Caffre child's place? Your first conscious touch is not the warm flesh of a mother, but the warm mother earth. You grasp it, play with it, fashion it into wonders. Your tears fall on it; your tired baby head rests on it. It makes you lovely flowers; the animals, your darling friends, burrow in it, love it. And would you not love it, this mother to whom you carried your griefs, who rested you, cared for you, made you happy, and would you not love its touch, love to lie upon it, breathe upon it, caress it?

It always yields to your touch, responds in some way to your love. Through babyhood, childhood, it remains always the same; 'tis now a part of your being to love and be loved by the earth. You know no human love, no other touch

of affection; suddenly one day you find it turned hard and cold—it has hurt you. If one you loved, who had always been kind and true, should one day strike you, would it be easy to say at once to another, "Yes, he struck me; he has become unkind?" or would you not excuse or evade it, as Zan did in her sweet equivocation, "I guess 'twas just a stone?" I was more real to her than any human being had ever been, but I was not half as real, half as vital, to her as her earth. I was not so good to her, nor did I love her as well. I could never have hurt her by any act of mine as that bit of frozen ground had been able to do. Her world was changing so fast now; nothing was left that she cared for, the last twig was bare, the last rivulet frozen, the last insect hidden, the whole earth was bitterly repellent. And now there was falling this strange white snow, slowly but certainly burying the world.

Her imagination had been fired over the fancy of what it would be, but this long realization, this unvarying weird monotony of whiteness, numbed her with an unspeakable fear.

It had snowed for three days, but the next morning was bright and clear. When I came down, Zan was at her place

by the window again; the expression of interest that was on her face during the snowfall was gone, and a strangely solemn look in its place.

"Well, Zan?" I greeted her.

She started to speak, but the words would not come. I saw she was sadly unhappy, and tried to divert her. If I had known then what I learned afterward—that the brave little heart, which had never feared a living thing, was stricken with terror at the sight of the whole world dead, and the thought that she should never feel again the soft earth under her, or hear the birds sing, or see the bushes' blossoms—I might have cheered the child, might have taken her away from the dreary expanse of whiteness and coldness. What was life to her now? Would she not a hundred times rather have been beaten by Mrs. Beer among her dear living surroundings, and would she not have been the happier, too?

Day after day she must have watched through those long winter months to see if the earth would come to life again, and perhaps hoped a little as she watched. But at last the little ray of hope must have gone, for each day seemed colder and the wind bleaker than ever before.

I remember one morning, when Zan's shadowy bit of a figure stood at the door, there were two little snow-sparrows lying lifeless outside.

"Poor birdies," I said. "It was such a cold night for them. We can't even bury them, can we?"

She looked pale and frightened, but I did not divine the reason. I prided myself on knowing what the little thing felt. Yet how stupid I was never to have suspected that she was picturing us as soon lying frozen like the dead sparrows on the snow! that her heart was saying, "Everything is dying!" I cannot help blaming myself that I never talked to her of our spring and summer; that I was the great selfish bachelor I was instead of a creature that could have felt and seen more of what was in a life so near him.

She still grew thinner and weaker day after day, till at last she just lay in her bed and watched the dead world from there.

It must have been to her a terrible never-ending funeral. The first I came to know of this feeling that possessed her was only a few days before she died. The doctor had not been in for some days, as there was nothing he could do

for her. The child had no disease whatever, yet we had given up all hope of keeping her much longer. She seldom spoke now. I watched her eyes as they kept wandering toward the window—it was snowing—a sign of late for her to grow worse more rapidly. She turned her eyes from the window to me, and asked, in her soft, weak voice,

"Are they all dead but you?" I thought she was wandering, but she kept those great solemn eyes on me and continued: "You'll be dead soon, won't you? It's gettin' colder, and the snow's gettin' deeper. It's long off since the ground died, and then the birds, and the doctor is dead. Molly said the hens had frozen. Molly's froze now, ain't she?" The light touch of the wee, wee hand that weakly crept into mine thrills me. "I hope you won't freeze yet, not till after—"

What could I say then? I know that I tried to talk of birds, of flowers, of sunshine and summer, but I know my voice choked me. I sent out for dogs, cats, birds, children. I kept my horse standing in front of her window. I sent to the city for flowers. I cursed myself that I had not been born a woman, or with a woman's sense. To have let her

die by inches without a vestige of life or brightness about her, all the time complacently flattering myself that I, her savior, her rescuer, embodied all earthly happiness for her! But my enlightenment came all too late. The wee spark of life could not be fanned into a flame. A few mornings later little Zan Zoo became as still as the sparrows. Just a closing forever of those big dark eyes and the faint bit of breath stopped.

Call it what you like. A foolish sentiment? Perhaps. But I shall never regret the long journey I took to lay the little Caffre girl on the veld she loved so dearly. I could not find the spot again where I laid her. I wanted no curious eyes to stare at her resting-place. The sugar-birds and the toads and the doves will find her, and the spring-bok will stop in his flight as he nears her; the warm earth will guard her. No hope lies nearer my heart than that now, somehow, somewhere, Zan Zoo is happy.

THE END